DISSENT

The Shabby Times Of Richard Nixon

Jervis Anderson: **The Police and the Panthers** . . . *Lewis Coser:* **The Politics of Atrocities** . . . *Robert Lekachman:* **Tax Policy—A Gift for the Man Who Has Everything** . . . *Eugene Keller:* **Inflation and Social Priorities** . . . *Gordon Haskell:* **Civil Liberties—to Hell in a Basket?** . . . *Irving Howe:* **Outrage in Chicago**

120

THOMAS R. BROOKS
Black Upsurge in the Unions

124

RICHARD ROBBINS
Up Against the Statler-Hilton Wall

EUGENE GOODHEART
The *New York Review*: A Close Look

STANLEY MOORE
Utopian Themes in Marx and Mao

BENJAMIN I. SCHWARTZ
The Religion of Politics
A Detailed Critique of Hannah Arendt

MARCH–APRIL 1970 $1.25

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DISSENT

MARCH–APRIL 1970

DISSENT is a journal devoted to radical ideas and the values of socialism and democracy. It seeks to serve as a forum for writers devoted to these ideas and values, while also welcoming a wide variety of other opinions. Each writer speaks for himself; there is no effort made to exact editorial consensus or uniformity.

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COMMENTS AND OPINIONS

OUTRAGE IN CHICAGO —*by Irving Howe* 102

THE INEVITABILITY OF SONGMY —*by Lewis Coser* 103

TAXES: A GIFT FOR THE MAN WHO HAS EVERYTHING—*by Robert Lekachman* 106

INFLATION AND SOCIAL PRIORITIES —*by Eugene Keller* 110

CIVIL LIBERTIES: TO HELL IN A BASKET?—*by Gordon K. Haskell* 116

ARTICLES

PANTHERS: BLACK MEN IN EXTREMIS —*by Jervis Anderson* 120

BLACK UPSURGE IN THE UNIONS —*by Thomas R. Brooks* 124

THE *New York Review:* A CLOSE LOOK —*by Eugene Goodheart* 135

THE RELIGION OF POLITICS: REFLECTIONS ON THE THOUGHT OF HANNAH ARENDT —*by Benjamin I. Schwartz* 144

UP AGAINST THE STATLER-HILTON WALL —*by Richard Robbins* 162

UTOPIAN THEMES IN MARX AND MAO —*by Stanley Moore* 170

EDUCATION: THE ANSWER TO POVERTY? —*by S. M. Miller and Pamela Roby* 177

COMMUNICATIONS

MORE ON CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE —*by Howard Zinn* 183

MOVIES

ON THE TRAIL OF THE AMERICAN HERO —*by Washington Henry* 185

BOOKS

REVIEWS—*by Norman S. Care, Allen Guttmann, and John H. Gagnon* 187

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Outrage in Chicago

The following letter, in condensed version, was sent to the New York Times *by the editor of* Dissent:

February 20, 1970

TO THE EDITOR:

It is hard to speak of the Chicago trial with anything but bitterness. What occurred there was not merely a juridical burlesque, but a moral disgrace. And for anyone who cares about the future of the American young, it was a political disaster.

Consider the sequence of events: an indictment on charges of "conspiracy," which by its very nature is juridically imprecise and factually dubious, and of crossing a state line with intent to incite a riot, which by its very nature is utterly vague and perhaps unconstitutional; a trial in which the presiding judge behaved in a style we have come to expect from the Soviet "courts," even going so far as to prohibit testimony from former Attorney General Ramsey Clark; a sentence for contempt that is without precedent in its savage vindictiveness; a conviction on the lesser of the two charges by a jury "compromising its differences; a maximum sentence by a judge inflamed, inhumane, and perhaps deranged.

It will be said that the defendants behaved badly. Suppose we grant that. Suppose we admit their intention was to stage a political spectacle rather than a legal defense. Does that in the slightest free the court from its proclaimed obligations to impartiality, dignity, and mercy?

But let me say something else on this score. The man on the bench and the man in the dock are not in the same position. The former has power to hurt, the latter can do little but accept hurt. The defendants were outraged at what they regarded as an act of political persecution—how can any decent man not share that outrage? Their conduct may have been tactically unwise, but if the man sitting on the bench had behaved with fairness and restraint, they too might have modulated their conduct, and in any case we would not today feel that the whole thing was a rotten farce.

The *New York Times* takes editorial consolation from the "quiet justification of the jury system." I say the *Times* is deluding itself. Reports from the jurors indicate the verdict was made through a deal among themselves to hasten their return home. They gained a day or two, the defendants lost years. Is that a "quiet justification of the jury system"?

Politically, the trial will lead to further polarization, with the Agnew-inspired Right encouraged to press for fiercer prosecution of dissidents and the New Left driven into moods of desperation. There will be an enormous increase among the young in the already-strong feeling that democracy is a sham, that there is no recourse except violent measures, that claims for liberal values and tolerance are mere deception. Until this trial, the New Left was far advanced in political self-destruction; now it will gain new sympathy on the campus.

Do the people running this country, men like Agnew and Mitchell, really suppose that dissident youth can be answered through police sticks and jail sentences? As a man of the Democratic Left, who has sometimes found himself in agreement with some of the defendants and more often in disagreement, I must assure our Attorney General that he is mistaken. It is foolish to suppose that repression can silence the political supporters of the Chicago defendants. Those supporters may be wrong, but they are serious and prepared to suffer for their ideas.

Looking at the shambles that has been created in Chicago, and considering the consequences likely to follow, I can only repeat with anger and despair the words young people keep directing to men in authority: when will they ever learn?

—IRVING HOWE

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Lewis Coser

The Inevitability of Songmy

COLONEL JOSEPH BELLAS IS PROBABLY one of those ordinary officers not likely to be remembered in the annals of warfare, but he recently delivered himself of a statement that is unforgettable. The Colonel is in command of a hospital in Vietnam where a number of soldiers recently boycotted Thanksgiving dinner as a protest against the war. Said the Colonel, "They're young, they're idealistic and don't like man's inhumanity to man. As they get older, they will become wiser and more tolerant."

Tolerant? Herbert Marcuse already accomplished a feat of semantic legerdemain when he talked about "repressive tolerance," but the Colonel beats the dialectician. In his dictionary tolerance is equated with lack of compassion, insensitivity, and a loss of the essential human quality of empathy.

Yet, in a sense, Colonel Bellas does not distort the American experience in Vietnam; he merely expresses it with characteristic bluntness. A consequence of American involvement in Vietnam has been the atrophy of human sensibilities among nearly all those who have been involved in it.

What strikes one most about the massacre at Songmy or Pinkville on March 16, 1968, is not that it occurred, but that it took more than a year and a half until it came to public knowledge. It seems apparent that participants, superior officers at headquarters in Washington, and Mr. Thieu's government—even the North Vietnamese and the Vietcong—saw it as an event not far removed from the ordinary. The "other side" apparently did not consider it qualitatively different from other atrocities committed by Americans, and "our side" seems to have shared the opinion.

What distinguishes ordinary wars from wars fought in the name of religion or ideology, and from colonial wars against alien races, is that in the latter two types the adversary comes to be seen as lacking essential human characteristics. When the crusaders—knightly warriors trained in courtly combat and accustomed to treating enemies with all the regard for honor that marked feudal warfare among Christians—encountered the Muslim infidels, they felt no compunction in maiming and killing children or in burning cities. In the crusaders' perception, the infidels, being not only in error but in sin, lacked human characteristics. In this logic, Christians were quite justified in wiping them from the face of the earth, as one is justified in exterminating vermin. The crusaders saw themselves engaged in a hygienic operation.

When British gentlemen confronted unruly natives in India or Burma, they did not hesitate, trained though they were in the virtues of fair play, to bomb and burn their villages. The British were engaged, as they saw it, in a fumigating expedition, helping rid the countryside of obnoxious human undergrowth.

Limited wars are fought for limited objectives. Wars of religion and their modern equivalent, ideological wars, are marked by unrestrained violence since victory can only come when the offensive creed is wiped out. Colonial wars resemble ideological wars when the natives are seen and labeled as quintessentially alien. "The savage strangeness of the enemy," Hans Speier has written, "inspires horrrors." The enemy's very existence comes to be perceived as a denial of all that is worthwhile and precious in the destiny of man.

How the enemy is named provides an essential clue to the character of a war. In limited wars the enemy may be referred to in terms that are meant to be pejorative but still leave intact his essential human characteristics. Calling the adversary a Kraut or a Fritz does not remove him from the human race, it may even

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connote a bit of condescending sympathy. Not so with terms used in ideological wars. A "Commie" is not "fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as a Christian is." He is a quintessential alien since he does not partake of the pieties and assumptions that surround our habitual moral universe. He is purely malevolent—and hence must be squashed like a worm.

A "gook" is the modern colonial equivalent of a "Commie." The Koreans were gooks, and the South Vietnamese are gooks, just like the North Vietnamese. American soldiers who habitually use this term thereby signify to themselves and to others that these men are less than men. They are not perceived, to use Buber's terminology, as a Thou but as an It. They are not "our kind," their ways are strange, barbarian, unclean and incomprehensible. So immense is the distance between "them" and "us," they are perceived as not belonging to the human race.

Orville Schell and others have told of the satisfaction expressed by American air crews in searching out and gunning down any and all Vietnamese they spotted in areas defined as hostile. In such cases it may still be said that the invisibility of the concrete target can account for the callousness. But when men are designated as gooks, the designation serves, so to say, as a functional equivalent of invisibility. Once men are so defined, their suffering, though concretely visible, is still not perceived. A few years ago a Norwegian social scientist interviewed a number of concentration-camp and prison guards who had brutally murdered Jewish, Ukrainian, and other prisoners during the war, and were now imprisoned in their turn. He claims that they showed no evidence of guilt or remorse and maintained staunchly that they had been justified in acting as they did because their victims were not "people like you and me." To be sure, most American soldiers in Vietnam have probably not become as dehumanized as these prison guards, yet one cannot help feel that for most of them gooks are not people "like you and me."

Government officials from President Nixon down are now busy explaining that Songmy was "an isolated incident." This is a revolting lie. It was not. At Songmy, one of the participants reports, "We just pushed them all off a ravine, and just started using automatics on them . . . men, women and children . . . and babies." "Everyone who went into the village," says another participant, "had in mind to kill. We had lost a lot of buddies, and so on." But lest it be thought that these men lost their nerves under exceptional tension, let it be recorded that a few days after the incident Lieutenant Calley, the leader of the first platoon at Songmy, "threw an elderly South Vietnamese civilian man down a well and shot him through the head."

A soldier who had been a participant in the Songmy massacre put the matter most clearly, "You can't just blame Calley's platoon; you've got to blame everyone. It was a free fire zone. And you know, if you can shoot artillery and bombs in there every night, *how can the people in there be worth so much?*" (My emphasis.) As so many "good people" said in Nazi Germany about the Jews, "they must have done *something* to deserve such treatment." Hence, methods of warfare that would inspire horror and revolt when applied to human beings, are considered legitimate in regard to *them*. Once such methods are authorized, some soldiers reason that if these methods are appropriate it must be because the gooks deserve it.

All wars are hell. But it is morally obnoxious and mischievous not to discriminate among them. Colonial and ideological wars are worse than other wars since they are based on the denial of reciprocity between the antagonists and hence must routinely trigger reactions that in other wars occur only infrequently. The psychological mechanism involved has been caught in its phenomenological purity in an account by John Osborne, an editor of the *New Republic*:

> On an April afternoon in 1966, I visited a hamlet in the region of Pinkville with an American officer. While he was at his business . . . I noticed, across the paddies, a bowlegged and very small Vietnamese man running fast—to where and for what reason, I could not know but thought then that I knew. I assumed that he was running to tell the Vietcong of our presence and I thought to myself that somebody ought to shoot the goddamned gook.

A war against gooks who are also Commies leads to a certain kind of warfare and this

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leads to atrocities. It must. Hence it is foolish and indeed vicious to talk of "isolated incidents." Such talk only serves to legitimize the war as a whole. The war is responsible, and those who set it into motion bear the responsibility—not the soldiers who, lost in a world of threat and evil, react by committing atrocities.

Good People and Dirty Work

MOST COMMENTARIES ON SONGMY have limited themselves to the discussion of the impact of the war on American soldiers. Yet, its impact on American civilians deserves equal attention. We cannot rest satisfied with the smug belief that, while the war may have brutalized some of "them," it has not done harm to the moral sensibilities of "us." We are all in the same boat.

A few years ago the distinguished sociologist Everett C. Hughes was moved to ask why it was that so many "good people" in Germany had condoned the evils of the Nazis. He concluded that ordinary people can think of deeds so distasteful and horrible that they can never admit to being capable of performing them, and yet can be convinced that theses deeds need to be done. There then arises a moral disjunction in which morally distasteful acts are silently condoned by the very act of showing contempt for those specifically assigned to do this dirty work. This led Hughes to "raise the whole problem of the extent to which those pariahs who do the dirty work of society are really acting for the rest of us." He suggested that we give a kind of unconscious mandate to such people

> to go beyond anything we ourselves would care to do or even to acknowledge. . . . The higher and more expert functionaries who act in our behalf represent something of a distillation of what we may consider our public wishes, while some of the others show a sort of concentrate of those impulses of which we are or wish to be less aware.

The dissociation of moral sensibility implied in Hughes's analysis requires that some of these acts be conducted in secrecy so that the "good people" can engage in a strategy of denial, disclaiming guilty knowledge and asserting ignorance. However, when claims of ignorance are no longer credible, "good people" may resort to a new strategy, far more brutalizing than a denial that they knew of the dirty work. The "other" is cast into a subhuman category, his common humanity is denied and his brutal treatment justified by way of asserting his radical "otherness." Denial of knowledge of the plight of the victim may still come under the rubric of hypocrisy, and, as the French moralists knew, hypocrisy is the tribute that vice pays to virtue.

What we are witnessing now, however, is a much more frightening process. When the hor-

The "Other Side"--And We

IT HAS BEEN *rightly pointed out that, after they took power in 1954, the North Vietnamese Communists, by their own admission, killed at least 50,000 peasants in the course of forced collectivization. And the alleged murder of more than 2,000 people in Hue by the Viet Cong has been widely cited to counter American guilt over Song My.*

But how, then, explain the fact that, according to Senator Edward Kennedy's committee, more than 300,000 South Vietnamese civilians have died, most of them killed by American or Saigon troops? In other words, in the process of "saving" these people from a Communist dictatorship we have helped to kill more of them than the Communists. And that is not the result of a criminal or deranged reaction on the part of individual soldiers or even a company. It is the inevitable consequence of the unique character of this war in which the enormously destructive firepower of a modern army—bombs, napalm and all the rest—is used in a struggle in which there are no front lines and both friends and enemies are everywhere and look alike.

I am, of course, for justice being meted out to any who committed individual outrages—and I am for guaranteeing the accused the right to be tried under due process of law, not in the press. But punishing the guilty will not redeem America from a much more profound responsibility: that we have involved ourselves in the kind of conflict that made massacres more likely. . . .

Michael Harrington in *New America*, December 30, 1969

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rors of the war are brought home to all of us on our TV screens it is increasingly difficult to deny their existence. Instead, there seems to arise a conviction among many viewers that what happens to "them" cannot happen to *us* since *we,* the "good people," have nothing in common with *them,* those alien others upon whom we dare not lavish any sympathy. If this trend continues, we will enter a brutalizing age in which the "good people," far from trying to shield themselves from the impact of dirty work, will condone it with a good conscience. And when the conscience of "good people," rather than being protected by more or less hypocritical maneuvers, atrophies for good, then God help us all. Then each of us may become a gook to some other man.

As Nietzsche warned long ago, "Those who set out to kill monsters should take care not to turn into monsters themselves."

Robert Lekachman

Taxes: A Gift for the Man Who Has Everything

WHAT IS A GOOD TAX LAW?

Radicals are likely to apply three criteria to legislative handiwork. If, as economists in the days of the Old Welfare economics used to believe and socialists continue to believe, human beings are approximately equal in their rights and capacities to consume the good things of the earth, then a first standard is addressed to the measurement of inequality. *Good tax laws diminish inequality and bad ones increase it.* Hence, a genuinely progressive income tax (as distinguished from the current contraption) is an excellent thing, and still better are confiscatory inheritance levies.

That radical of his day, John Stuart Mill, was in 1848 proposing to tax away all inheritance estates save for small sums devoted to the education of the heirs. Although it is usually argued, though not very convincingly, that severely progressive income taxation impairs the vital incentives of the thrusting and the talented, the same objection applies, if at all, only with diminished force to imposts upon the properties of the dead and departed. It seems indeed more plausible that the children of millionaires will acquire increased incentives to burnish their talents and thus advance the public welfare if their incomes are narrowed by taxation than if they are permitted without further effort of their own to enjoy the fruits of their progenitors' financial acumen.

Taxes can serve a second radical goal: *the encouragement of socially useful and the discouragement of socially harmful private activities.* If social scientists dared make value judgments, they might support tax stimulation of low-cost housing, books and periodicals, good music and good musicians, talented artists, and imaginative architects. Taxes are equally capable of discouraging stock-market speculators, mineral-resource exploiters, conglomerate organizers, and expense-account virtuosi. The market, alleges conventional economic wisdom (pausing not to identify its biases and imperfections), makes impartial judgments. Consumers, blessed with the right to select from the free market, cast their dollar votes for the products of some sellers and against the offerings of others. The fortunate first group prospers. Unless the members of the second group are alert enough to change their ways promptly, they will achieve well-merited bankruptcy and thus release their resources (as the economist chastely puts it) for the use of their more gifted brethren.

All one can say about this fairy tale, I suppose, is that anyone who believes it has probably had his natural intellectual capacities dulled by too much graduate-school training. In the real world, the choice is usually between allowing one set of people rather than another to benefit from taxes and other legislative

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interventions. Neutrality in public administration is as mythological as the free market in the private sector.

Taxes can serve a third radical purpose—*financing the dollar-starved public sector.* American cities are decreasingly safe, attractive, traversible, and endowed with such routine amenities as breathable air, drinkable water, unlittered streets, and adequate stocks of decent housing, because trivial sums have been expended on municipal services, schools, mass transportation, public housing, and environmental control—let alone city planning and urban design. If the time should ever come when a national wish to rescue the cities supersedes present apathy, then vast sums of money will be required to remedy the consequences of decades of neglect. Only the federal tax system is capable of diverting the needed sums from private expenditure to public purpose.

One can think of other worthy tax objectives, among them the subsidy of especially vulnerable groups and the amelioration of unemployment (where this second objective is not best served by increased public spending). But the three criteria I have stressed seem best to differentiate egalitarian socialists from conventional Keynesians.

ALL OF THIS is a preliminary to a distressed examination of the measure that Congress passed in the waning days of 1969, the so-called "Tax Reform Act of 1969." After the lobbyists for "good" causes like universities and foundations and bad ones like real estate and oil got done with what started as a "revolt" by ordinary taxpayers at the disgusting spectacle of the benefits and loopholes enjoyed by their sharper fellow citizens, what kind of legislative animal marched to the White House? I am aware that taxes tend to glaze the eyes of all but inveterate accountants, lawyers, economists, and masochists. Tax complexity is indeed one of the strongest protections of the crafty. I shall try all the same to summarize as briefly as possible the principal features of the new law and then consider how far it departs from radical criteria of desirability.

A major tax inevitably presents the appearance if not necessarily the reality of offering something for everybody. This is the way Congressional coalitions are glued together and Presidents are prevented from vetoing their productions. Accordingly, Congress gave the elderly a 15 percent increase in their social-security benefits, possibly enough to keep pace with rising consumer prices. The poor get two breaks: larger exemptions (by 1973, $750 per person instead of the present $600) and bigger standard deductions (by 1973, $2,000 or 15 percent instead of the current $1,000 or 10 percent). The combined effect of these two changes will be to remove possibly as many as 5.5 million low-income individuals and families from the tax rolls.

The large taxpayer is treated with the delicacy that his status as major campaign contributor necessitates. The present maximum rate on taxable income over $52,000—60 percent—will fall by 1973 to 50 percent. The lawmakers proved themselves capable of sternness too. It had come belatedly to their attention that some exceedingly rich people had been sufficiently charitable, or sufficiently involved in oil, to pay no taxes at all. No longer can the tax advisers of the affluent combine exempt income and charitable deductions with capital gains, stock options, bad-debt deductions, and personal property depreciation so as to reduce, quite legally, taxable income to zero. From now on, when these sums exceed $30,000, every dollar in excess of that figure will be subject to the confiscatory impost of 10 percent. Never let it be said that Congress is soft on the rich.

I can think of no better way to complete a sketch of a measure warranted, as one CPA quoted by *Business Week* put it, to "keep us rich for 15 years," than to endorse the same periodical's sour editorial comment:

> As a reform bill, this one is pretty much a joke —albeit a bad one from the viewpoint of some taxpayers. It takes a nip here and a nip there —at the oil industry, at foundations, at capital gains. None of the nips draws real blood, and nowhere does Congress even attempt to come to grips with the question of whether special treatment of certain taxpayers and certain kinds of transactions is justified at all.

Despite much weeping and gnashing of teeth, all that the oil magnates face is a reduction of depletion allowances from 27½ percent to 22 percent. Their drilling and exploration benefits are undisturbed, and so are other lucrative escape hatches of nearly equivalent value. Real-estate operators will be slightly more damaged.

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The double depreciation allowance that used to apply to all construction in future will cover only new housing. Other structures will wear along as best they can at 150 percent of costs. After a good deal of flame and fury, the foundations will be subjected to a 4 percent tax on their investment income. And the tax document, 346 pages in length, unquestionably contains a host of sleepers that will gradually come to light over the next few years.

For the average taxpayer, the most notable feature of the measure will be the January 1, 1970, reduction of the surcharge on personal income from 10 to 5 percent and its total disappearance on July 1, 1970. This is the major revenue consequence of the tax changes and, for reasons that will appear later, it is possibly the very worst feature of a notably bad piece of legislation.

Let me now demonstrate the badness by applying the three radical criteria that I have identified.

Redistribution

PROBABLY THE NEATEST and surely the most libertarian way to shift resources from the rich to the poor is to supplement a steeply progressive personal income tax with a generous negative income tax. One way of approaching a negative income tax, recently suggested by Yale's James Tobin, is the grant of a flat cash tax allowance per taxpayer and each of his dependents. If the taxes due on his earned income were less than this allowance, the Treasury would mail him a check for the difference. Thus a $150 per person tax allowance for a family of six with zero earned income would result in a $900 payment by the Treasury. Such a family derives no benefit at all from alterations in positive tax rates, or increases in exemptions and deductions, for the decisive reason that it pays no taxes to be reduced.

All the same, there is no reason to sneer at the combination of deduction and exemption changes which will improve the tax and income situation of the five and a half million taxpayers, who are quite poor even if not desperately deprived. This modest move in the direction of equity would be more meaningful, however, if it were not joined to net deterioration at the other end of the income scale. How little the beneficiaries of tax-sheltered income will actually be damaged by the new law is implied by the estimates of new revenue that will be derived. The new "Draconian" rules will extract possibly $635 million from the multimillionaires who are presently paying little or nothing. The oil fat cats will pay an additional $435 million. For all practical purposes, the loopholes are as large as ever and it is possible to do no more than speculate about some of the new ones cunningly inserted into law.

This is inequitable standing by itself. It is the more outrageous because Congress has further diminished the progression of the personal income tax. It is worth remembering that before 1964's celebrated tax cut the top incremental rate was 91 percent. Under 1969's tax steal it will fall all the way to 50 percent. For practical economists of good will the strongest argument for scaling down the progression was greater ease of loophole plugging and diminished pressure for tax avoidance. What we now are presented with is less progression and just about the same assortment of loopholes as won some of their acceptance from the presence of much severer rates of assessment. What Kennedy began has been completed (one hopes!) by Nixon. It is almost, though not quite, enough to turn one into a Weatherman.

The Tax Reform Act of 1969 either retains or accentuates the elements of the federal tax structure which have the effect of sheltering income from property and capital gains, encouraging speculation, enlarging the personal fortunes of reactionary oil men, permitting a favored minority to supplement its income with huge tax-free expense-account allowances, and stimulating the accumulation of vast individual estates.

If anything, I have understated the harmful impact of this measure. It amounts from its title onward to a major deception of the public. The appearance has been given of real reform. Even a financial writer like Edwin Dale, who should know better, took the reform features seriously in a *New Republic* assessment. The ordinary citizen, thinking that a shrewd blow has been struck against the tax profiteers, will turn his attention to other issues. At a most generous estimate the new imposts upon real estate, oil and minerals, banks, multiple corporations, foundations, mergers, and tax-sheltered income will earn the Treasury perhaps $3 billion, a trivial price to pay for the removal of

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pressure for genuine tax reform for years to come. The Treasury will garner another $3 billion from the repeal of the investment tax credit, if the major corporations do not succeed in passing on their higher taxes to their customers. Yet again Congress has proven itself a fearless defender of the strong.

Allocation

BOTH HOUSE AND SENATE spent an inordinate amount of time threatening punitive taxation of foundations. I should hasten to interpolate my view that foundations have been a mixed blessing. Many are little more than tax-avoidance and creator-glorification devices; quite a few have engaged in right-wing propaganda, and others have been guilty of some exceedingly devious commercial activities. There is good reason to police and restrain such inappropriate uses of tax exemption.

Unfortunately, Congress had its mind on a less constructive goal, control of some of the socially important work that the major foundations had begun to support. Southerners were aggravated by foundation-financed voter registration drives in black districts. Urban congressmen resented the Ford Foundation's role in the funding of CORE in Cleveland and of the public-school experiment in New York's Ocean Hill-Brownsville. For years, of course, the critics of foundations have deplored their targets' timidity and the conventionality of their grants. The reward of innovation appears to have been Congressional wrath.

The foundations have escaped comparatively lightly. They will pay the rather small levy of 4 percent on investment income instead of the much higher rates originally proposed in the House Ways and Means Committee. The conference committee eliminated a Senate provision that would have terminated the life of a foundation at the end of 40 years. A new requirement that foundations distribute annually all income aside from capital gains seems entirely justified. The appropriate goal of foundations is advancement of public purposes, not mere accumulation of assets.

In the end the enemies of the foundations may win the war. The danger is real that foundations will be frightened back into safe grants to hospitals, universities, and medical research. The Ford Foundation has undoubtedly made its mistakes, but its biggest one would be a retreat into the role preferred by conservative congressmen.

At best then, Congress refrained from active discouragement or prohibition of foundation experiments with social change. Other sections of the law manifest small inclination either to penalize the harmful or reward the beneficial. One or two exceptions deserve mention. New favorable amortization arrangements will presumably encourage the installation of antipollution equipment, at a cost to the Treasury of some $120 million each year. Rehabilitation of structurally sound residential property is to be subsidized to the extent of approximately $330 million annually. The repeal of the investment tax credit removes a subsidy to businessmen, never justified for its social desirability.

In this Congress, one should perhaps be grateful that the outcome did not add significantly to the burdens borne by the enlightened. It certainly did little to increase the load of the wicked.

Impact upon Revenues

THE MOST DEVASTATING FEATURE of the tax bill is its impact upon future tax receipts, the source of funds for new social programs in the post-Nixon future. In voting against the measure, Senators Javits and Goodell emphasized this point which (to their discredit) very few of their liberal Democratic colleagues appeared to take seriously. Before the new law, the Treasury could expect to collect an additional $15 billion per year from normal Gross National Product expansion of $30 billion to $40 billion annually. The elimination of the surcharge sheared away $9 billion of the original $15 billion, and other changes took away practically the entire remainder.

It is neither paradox nor faulty reasoning which has led Milton Friedman and his Chicago associates to advocate tax reduction even in time of inflation and in the face of the conventional Keynesian wisdom that teaches the necessity of the opposite fiscal course. Friedman, as well as Congressman Wilbur Mills, has understood that if taxes are sufficiently reduced, a responsible President and Congress will, perforce, cut the expenditure suit to fit the skimpy revenue cloth. Mills and his conservative friends have consistently assaulted federal

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spending on anything except the Pentagon. Mills compelled President Kennedy to slow the expansion of federal spending as the price of Ways and Means processing of the 1964 tax measure. He compelled Lyndon Johnson to accept an expenditure ceiling on all federal outlays as the prerequisite to House clearance of the 1968 surcharge. No one should be astonished at his 1969 triumph, the conversion of a tax-reform sentiment into a tax-cut law.

When and if Vietnam releases some additional funds, it is highly probable that the military will gobble them up for their deadly toys, ABM's, new tanks, improved fighter planes, and so on. Only the normal growth of federal revenues have provided a realistic source of funds for the cities and the poor. Congress has quite deliberately taken the money away. To their shame Congressional liberals concurred.

The performance contains a final twist. After Nixon signed the bill, the Administration let it be known that the President may have to come back to Congress for new tax money. This, the leaks have it, will come from a value-added levy, a favorite of the Common Market countries. It is a sales tax, levied at each stage of fabrication and distribution, upon value contributed at that stage. Although it is a neat technical device, it is at heart a sales tax—and sales taxes, notoriously, are the least equitable and the most regressive of all ways to raise money. Thus the 1970 contribution to social justice may be an unhappy combination of diminished progression in personal income taxation and increased collections from regressive taxes, even now a major reliance of state and local governments.

No one need be astounded by conservative inclinations to shift tax burdens from the strong and rich to the poor and weak. But little could better exemplify the disarray of urban liberals than the pitiful handful courageous enough to follow the Republican example of Javits and Goodell.

I HAVE WRITTEN ENOUGH and more to explain why I judge the Tax Reform Act of 1969 the neatest conservative trick since the Kennedy administration began giving away money to the rich in the sacred name of economic growth. After its long labors, Congress has succeeded in finding the perfect gift for the man who has everything. The rest of us can plan to pay the bill for a long time to come.

Eugene Keller

Inflation and Social Priorities

INFLATION has become the major economic problem in the U.S. The "fight against inflation" mounted by the Nixon administration is of necessity conducted at the expense of the working poor, much of organized labor, and younger breadwinners with wages and salaries near starting levels. There is no likelihood inflation will be slowed except by permitting cyclical forces to generate unemployment and halt the growth in incomes.

Inflation has tended to depress not only the purchasing power of those who must live on fixed payments; it also is at the root of deteriorating living standards of large groups of workers. Spendable weekly earnings of the average factory worker with three dependents rose in 1969 by 4 percent, to $111, but the purchasing power of his earnings has not risen since 1965, despite steady gains in productivity. If family income has nevertheless advanced, that is because a second and third member is employed in addition to the family head. In 1968, 54 percent of all American families had two or more earners, compared with 48 percent in 1965, and 43 percent in 1953. While this increase in number and proportion of multiple-earner families reflects an expansion in available jobs, it also means, especially for the most recent period, that much of the increase of women in the labor

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force has occurred under pressure of economic necessity. For at $111 a week, the factory worker's pay will not begin to meet the $9,600 a year it costs (after taxes) to maintain a "normal" standard of living in metropolitan areas for a family of four.

It is an ironic commentary on the failure of American society to cope with its problems that its presumed domestic priorities, once postponed when escalation of the Vietnam war led to inflation, again are postponed now that the "fight against inflation" reduces available resources. The slim gains made possible earlier by high employment levels are now being eroded. According to *Business Week* of January 17, 1970

> Layoffs are threatening nationwide efforts to rehabilitate people once thought unemployable. Many of the so-called hard-core unemployed have lost new jobs in auto and farm equipment plants, and others are likely to lose their jobs in steel and other industries if industrial slowdowns continue. The numbers are relatively small so far, probably only in the low thousands. But the layoffs have only begun. . . . Beyond the layoffs, however, is something worse for the campaign to put the ghetto people into jobs. New hiring is at a low level, and there are fewer and fewer starting jobs for those recruited from the ghetto. . . .

Unemployment is not likely to rise much above 5.5 percent of the labor force, although the decline in new job opportunities probably will be substantial. However small the rise in joblessness may be, it is likely to intensify social strife—without contributing much toward stopping inflation. The reasons for this are rooted in a deepening conflict over social priorities—a conflict relatively new to this country, but endemic to the economies of the Western world and Japan at least since the early fifties. I do not intend to deal here with this conflict, but will restrict myself to an analysis of some of the causes of the recent inflationary phase. However, an understanding of inflation gains in perspective if framed in terms of that conflict.

In this article, inflation is seen as the result of a breakdown in economic policies based on neoclassical assumptions about the equilibrium of "free markets," and of the attempt to safeguard this equilibrium by means of voluntary wage-price guidelines. The demise of the guidelines in 1965 was followed by brazenly irresponsible inflationary wartime financing which Congress, abdicating its fiscal responsibilities, validated by authorizing funds without raising the revenues to cover them. Government policy thus has been at the root of the inflationary upswing in prices.

Inflation has been attributed by some economists to rapidly rising labor costs and by others to a "profits push"; but rising labor costs have been merely effect not cause, and no profits push occurred at all. Nor did prices rise most in industry sectors where market power was greatest; rather, price increases were most rapid in sectors where such power was limited. Basically, the process of inflation has involved the appropriation of savings by powerful corporate interests through the agency of financial institutions and high interest rates, and this appropriation, together with deficit financing of the Vietnam war, has been the main cause of the scarcity of resources for socially needful purposes and for their rising cost.

SOME INFLUENTIAL ECONOMISTS have held that a "moderate" degree of inflation, defined as an average annual increase in the price level of 2–3 percent, is an unavoidable side effect of full employment, and that the effort of the Republican administration to combat it has been inspired mainly by conservative ideology. These economists minimize inflation and assign primacy to full employment, but they do assume the superiority of "free markets" over any form of administrative control. In their view, the tendency of market power to determine resource allocation could be restrained through appropriate legal devices that would not call into question the workings of a free market.

The acceptance of the free market as the basis for both economic growth and the most equitable means of distributing economic gains also underlay the idea of wage-price guidelines, as formulated by the Council of Economic Advisers in the early sixties. These guidelines assumed that the main source of inflationary

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pressure arose from the excessive market power of the major industries and the bargaining power of organized labor in these industries. They sought to limit wage gains in this high-concentration sector to improvements in productivity, and to prevent prices from increasing altogether—while permitting wages and prices in low-concentration industries, where productivity tended to lag, to "catch up." The general price level would thus remain more or less unchanged or would rise gradually. The wage-price guidelines were a set of reasonable norms of economic behavior. Adherence to them would in time have required some form of administrative control (they had been proposed as voluntary). Strategically exerted pressure by government agencies on major private contractors, and the consent of the trade unions, would also have been necessary. (Only the UAW took an essentially positive position on the guidelines.)

The guidelines were abandoned in 1965 as inefficacious in a period of rapidly rising costs and consumer prices. The same forces that had prevented their acceptance in the earlier sixties made still more unlikely the imposition of those administrative or fiscal controls which the capital- and consumer-spending boom of the mid-sixties seemed to mandate as it merged with the escalating manpower and materiel requirements of the Vietnam war. Resistance to such controls followed in part from popular indifference and hostility to the war. And the opposition of conservative elements in and out of Congress to the expansion of welfare-state legislation under President Johnson (which the proceeds from increased taxes would have facilitated) blended with the natural resistance of industrial and financial interests, as well as of most of the official trade union leadership, to any control over their freedom of economic action.

Unable to enlarge the fiscal base in order to pay for the war as well as for existing and proposed social programs, the Johnson administration resorted instead to inflationary finance. The Nixon administration has attempted to halt the shift in resources to the public sector, as is implied in such finance. Its cutbacks in defense spending are part of this reversal; so are its efforts to halt the growth in vital domestic programs and its support for the repeal of the surtax. Congress, for its part, has passed major tax legislation which in effect also rechannels resources into the private sector. At estimated 1970 incomes, tax relief will bring a reduction of $13 billion in federal revenues (*not* including the loss due to the justified increase in tax benefits for low-income families). Nixon's economic policy, insofar as he can be said to have one, links up with that pursued under the Democrats who—through liberalized depreciation allowances, a generous investment tax credit, and a steep cut in personal income taxes—stimulated the growth primarily of the private sector. Even so, unemployment did not drop below 4 percent of the labor force until sometime in 1965, when the Vietnam war siphoned off large numbers of men and women into defense industries and the armed forces.

In sum, the concern with freedom of economic action that led private interests to oppose wage-price guidelines in the early sixties and more drastic controls later on—thus contributing to the speedup in the price-wage spiral—now prompts the Nixon administration to brake economic growth and to neutralize the economic impact of the federal budget in order to slow inflation. The old-fashioned business cycle, characterized by a phase of overexpansion and a subsequent phase of retrenchment, is here replaced by a new, political kind of cycle, in which a phase of rapid expansion of the public sector and the industries linked with it is superseded by a reassertion of private-sector dominance.

RECENT ANALYSES OF INFLATION in the United States have usually been either evasive about underlying causes or reactionary in their impact on official policy. Those who assert that there is a "trade-off" between high employment and inflation—i.e., that the price level rises at an accelerated rate as unemployment drops below 4 percent of the labor force—implicitly shift the burden of anti-inflationary policy to wage and salary workers, since raising the unemployment rate so as to weaken demand and stabilize prices means that people lose their jobs or that youngsters and women in need of jobs cannot find any. (The unemployment rate may not even rise by much if

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these so-called marginal workers become discouraged and withdraw from the job search altogether and therefore are not counted as unemployed.)

Some economists, however, including the highly competent ones who defend labor's interests, have conceived of a "profits push," in opposition to the more frequently cited "wage push," as the major cause of the current inflation. They acknowledge the sharp rise in unit labor costs since 1966 and defend it, rightly, as a result of workers' organized efforts to maintain their gains and the purchasing power of their earnings. Yet, when a man of the stature of Leon Keyserling speaks of a "profit inflation" (as he did in his statement before the Joint Economic Committee of Congress a year ago), and contrasts the 112 percent climb in corporate profits between 1960 and 1968 with a 7.5 percent increase in industrial prices, one is baffled as to how so huge a rise in profits can leave so minor a mark on price levels and still be considered a cause of inflation. Both Keyserling and the spokesmen for the unions ignore the fact that over the past four years of strongly rising prices, corporate profits after taxes rose only about 10 percent and declined in proportion to the gross national product; profits per dollar of sales in manufacturing have barely changed at all. Moreover, nearly all of the advance in profits referred to by Keyserling occurred between 1961 and 1965, a period of relative price stability but of steady growth in the rate of capacity utilization, and therefore of declining unit labor costs.

I submit that those who explain the inflation of the past three to four years as the result of a "profits push" are evading the problem, and they are perhaps doing so because of their political alliance with old-line Democratic party elements, an alliance that has prevented them from forthrightly analyzing and criticizing the deleterious effects of the Vietnam war on the economic position of workers. The official statements of the AFL–CIO and the UAW before the Joint Economic Committee do not breathe a word about these consequences. Instead, they find a more convenient target in the administered price policies of the big corporations. Undeniably, administered prices carry an inflationary bias, as the recent increase in steel prices in the face of weakening demand has again demonstrated. Moreover, the power of big business to set prices unconstrained by competition has been growing. According to a study by the Cabinet Committee on Price Stability (January 1969), the share of total assets in manufacturing held by the 200 largest firms increased from 48 percent in 1947 to 59 percent in 1967. In 1968, three-quarters of net profits in manufacturing (totaling $7.4 billion) were earned by 529 firms, which accounted for less than 1 percent of all manufacturing firms. Yet, while these facts attest the market power of the big corporations, they do not represent a new development, and they do not prove that administered prices were the cause, or a major cause, of the recent inflationary upswing in prices.

Neither the "trade-off" and "wage push" nor the "profits push" and administered prices satisfactorily explain that upswing. Perhaps a simpler alternative explanation is offered below.

RECENT INFLATION has been the outcome of the rechanneling of manpower and material resources toward war and plant and equipment spending, under conditions in which free play was given to the market power of government and industry in commanding access to the capital markets and the commercial banks. A few statistics will document the point. I will dwell on the financial mechanism at somewhat greater length because of its decisive importance in allocating real resources in a modern capitalist economy.

- Between 1965 and 1968, 85 percent of the increase in the male labor force was absorbed either by the military or by defense industries. These workers and soldiers consume wealth without replacing it which not only drains resources but, in an economy already running near the limits of its capacity, strains supply and pushes up prices.
- Of the $258 billion increase in the gross national product between 1965 and the third quarter of 1969, $30 billion were added to defense expenditures (which rose to $80 billion). But that additional sum represents only what the federal government paid in goods and services for military purposes.

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• In order to make such huge additions to defense production possible, fixed investment outlays by private industries had to be stepped up (inventories too, which I am ignoring here). The total rise in those outlays amounted to $30 billion over the four-year period, and while it cannot be determined how much of that rise was stimulated or necessitated by military needs, certain indications suggest that these needs accounted for at least one-fifth of the rise. When the direct expenditures on the Vietnam war are added to the plant and equipment spending that broadened the war production base, and when we also consider the consumption outlays of defense workers, then, on an admittedly crude estimate, up to one-quarter of the increase in gross national product went for purposes which either represented consumption of wealth that was not replaced or expansion of plants supporting such consumption. The usually cited statistic indicating the relatively small proportion of the GNP that goes for defense, 8–10 percent, is thus thoroughly misleading when the impact of military outlays *in a changing situation* is considered.

• The Vietnam war was financed in the main by an enormous budgetary deficit. Its inflationary effects, as has been pointed out, were mitigated neither by controls over wages and prices nor by appropriate fiscal and credit restraints. As Andrew Brimmer, a member of the Federal Reserve Board, has shown, two-thirds of expenditures related to the Vietnam war were financed by a federal budget deficit that came to nearly $38 billion over the 1965–68 fiscal-year period; this represented a ratio that was nearly as high as that of World War II, and that contrasted sharply with the budget surplus achieved during the Korean war (when Leon Keyserling was chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers).

Mr. Brimmer did not mention some equally significant war-finance facts concerning monetary policy. During World War II and the Korean war, the Federal Reserve absorbed much of the excess liquidity created by the federal deficit, by compelling the commercial banks to buy U.S. government securities and thus curtailing their lending capacity. During most of the Vietnam war period, however, the Federal Reserve consistently *bought* such securities, thus helping to expand lending capacity. If commercial bank holdings of government debt instruments have not declined, it is only because the banks shifted into the highly liquid, high-interest-bearing, shorter-term maturities. In fact, fully one-half of the public debt currently matures within one year, compared with less than one-third shortly after World War II and during the Korean war—a striking manifestation of inflationary war finance. Moreover, while during the Korean war reserve requirements of commercial banks, which determine the expandability of their credit-creating power, were raised and held at relatively high levels, during the Vietnam war period only an insignificant increase in these requirements was imposed. Their level has remained virtually unchanged for the past decade.

• While the Federal Reserve restricted commercial bank credit at certain periods in the past four years (as in mid-1966 and in 1969), it did so not by allocating reserves to banks in accordance with some priority scheme but by conventional means, which in effect simply raised the price of money, tended to restrict credit to prime risks, and devalued investment in long-term assets as interest rates kept rising. The manipulations of credit availability that were misnamed "monetary policy" proved to be a fiasco, unaccompanied as they were by broad-ranging economic and fiscal measures to restrain demand and apportion supply, as had been done, however imperfectly, during previous war periods. (After the first quarter of 1951, industrial prices declined and consumer prices stabilized, while unemployment remained near or below 3 percent of the labor force.) As fiscal agent of the Treasury, the Federal Reserve was compelled to satisfy federal financial needs. As it must also maintain "orderly conditions" in the money markets, it could not successfully resist accommodation of the uncontrolled economic forces let loose by the Vietnam war.

The banks, moreover, easily drew upon the Eurodollar assets of their foreign subsidiaries to increase their ability to lend. In the first nine months of 1969, for example, their Eurodollar borrowings totaled $15 billion, equivalent to about one-fifth of total business loans outstanding at the time, and nearly doubling

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the rate of growth of the money supply (including currency and demand deposits).

Furthermore, corporate demand on the capital markets increased enormously. Bond flotations by corporations, for example, doubled between 1965 and 1969—while corporations' internal financing from cash flow, generated by depreciation set-asides and retained profits, declined in relative importance from nearly three-quarters of their total financing to one-half. These financial developments effected a fundamental redirection of the flow of savings, and caused interest rates to rise to levels appropriate to the usury practiced in backward nations rather than to the capital-richest country in the world.

I HAVE DWELT upon the financial aspects of the recent inflationary developments because corporate power has asserted its priorities in large measure through the mechanism of financial institutions and operations. The raising of prices has been of secondary importance as a source of new investment funds. By their vast claims upon the reservoir of savings, the corporations and the federal government have made investments in social projects prohibitively expensive. Thus, although the federal debt is due to decline this fiscal year, the cost of interest is expected to rise by $1.3 billion, to $15.6 billion. High interest rates naturally lower the profitability of normally low-profit investments, such as residential housing and public and quasi-public facilities with their necessarily long payoff periods. It is true that the large-scale investments required to renew and expand health and educational infrastructures and to reverse the deterioration of cities and the environment can only in small part be funded through conventional financial means; but it would be a grave mistake to assume that if savings are channeled into the corporate sector through high interest rates, social priorities can even begin to be met.

The effects of high interest rates and the devaluation of long-term commitments—the obverse of high rates—have been devastating in residential housing. And they show how inflation, by redistributing income into rentier pockets, hinders the realization of social priorities, of which residential housing is an obvious instance. A few pertinent indications, culled from the report of the Commission on Mortgage Interest Rates to Congress (August 1969), illustrate this point.

According to this report, nonfinancial business and federal, state, and local governments raised total borrowing of funds from an annual average of $59 billion in 1961–65 to $86 billion in 1966–68, or by 60 percent. Mortgage borrowing, however, actually declined in the latter period, accounting for but one-fifth of the total, compared with about one-third during the former period and throughout the fifties. The key reason was the rapid increase in bond yields relative to mortgage rates, rooted in the fact, as the Commission's report states, that ". . . in an inflationary environment, corporations see prospects for profitable use of the borrowed funds far outweighing interest cost considerations; in addition, the after-tax cost of borrowing at a given interest rate is less for corporations than for most other borrowers."

Quite aside from these interrelations, the rise in mortgage rates has in itself priced an increasing number of families out of the housing market, and it has made the attainment of national housing goals, urged by various government commissions and the Housing and Urban Development Department, virtually unattainable within any reasonable period of time. "Each one percentage point rise in the interest rate on a 30-year mortgage increases the monthly payment for principal and interest by an eighth," writes the Commission. Thus, while a 5 percent rate spells a monthly housing expense of $195 on a $20,000 home with a 30-year mortgage (equivalent to 20 percent of the average family income of $11,800 in 1968), an 8 percent rate (the prevailing one at present) raises the monthly housing expense to $235 (thereby taking 24 percent of family income). Chiefly affected, of course, are younger home owners (and apartment dwellers), whose incomes tend to run below average; these are burdened most by high interest rates and resulting expenses, and therefore more likely to resist the increases in taxes needed to ameliorate social and physical conditions in their localities.

The goal of 26 million new dwelling units needed by 1978 is virtually out of reach—

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given the soaring expense of home building (the average price of a home rose from $22,700 in 1965 to $29,900 in 1969) and the lack of adequate funds at low interest. The number of new housing starts (including apartments) has run below 1.5 million annually for years, even as the number of marriages rose from 1.6 million annually in 1961–63 to 2 million in 1967–69. In some cities, such as New York, the disappearance of dwelling units now exceeds additions.

Among the recommendations of the Commission on Mortgage Interest Rates is that of stricter regulation of private pension funds: only 5 percent of the assets of these funds, totaling $80 billion in 1968, now is invested in residential mortgages, and the Commission would have the proportion raised. Yet the weakness of the Commission's recommendations stands revealed by the implications of the example it cites of the principle actually governing the investment of these and similar pools of savings. The assets of noninsured pension funds are nearly always managed by the trust departments of commercial banks which invest them as they see fit; e.g., Chase Manhattan exchanged large blocks of stock from 159 pension funds for a variety of securities in an outfit called Resorts International, whose main enterprise is a gambling casino in the Bahamas. Profitability is the investment criterion of the fund administrators; and inflation shifts profitability criteria in the direction of great economic power.

IN THE MONTHS AHEAD, the rise in price levels is generally expected to become more moderate, but the problem of competing claims upon the product of society will not subside in urgency: the reduction in defense expenditures, beyond doubt a good in itself, is nevertheless a conservative measure, designed to safeguard the viability of corporate business. The problem of competing claims cannot be resolved by neoclassical reliance on "market forces," implicit not only in such proposals as the wage-price guidelines but also in the gamut of economic policies formulated since World War II. For the power of corporate business and finance, allied with government agencies and part of the trade union leadership, stacks the cards against the poor, the blacks, the aged, and the younger workers. And inflation vitiates whatever gains they may score, unless they build the political base and a coherent program of economic planning with which to challenge that power.

Gordon K. Haskell

Civil Liberties: To Hell in a Basket?

ARE THE RIGHTS AND LIBERTIES of the American people being sent to hell in a basket? Or do they stand relatively secure, unaffected by "law and order" counterpressures?

Social and political tensions have been mounting through the late '60s. For Americans to the left of an imaginary center line, the political atmosphere has become smoggier since the assassination of John Kennedy, with only a slight relief during the McCarthy-Robert Kennedy campaign. After the fall of Joe McCarthy, the left-of-center felt the exhilaration of troops on the offensive. The freedom rides moved into the victory symbolized by the "Little Rock Nine" and then to the Mississippi summer, and through the early civil rights victories. From then on it has been pretty much downhill. Disintegration of the civil rights movement with "Black Power" getting the headlines; escalation of the war in Vietnam with all its consequences; city and university riots; and the Nixon-Agnew victory and all that has flowed from it.

That's a crude sketch of political moods, with the events mentioned merely as bench-marks of change. These changes have affected morale. But what effect have they had on "our rights and our liberties"?

The events crucial for answering this question are: the trials of the "Chicago Eight"; the widespread use of police and other government agents to infiltrate political organizations as re-

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vealed in those trials and elsewhere; changes in the Supreme Court.

THE CHICAGO CONSPIRACY TRIAL,* like the clashes surrounding the Democratic Convention in November 1968, is as good a model as we could find of the social processes likely to result from a clash of the most extreme forms of American radicalism with the forces now dominant in the federal government. (The above sentence is *not* the equivalent of: "The Chicago trial is a model of the clash between the extremes of the American political spectrum." Such a clash, say, between the Weathermen or Panthers and the Minutemen or Klu Klux Klan would be an open shoot-out.)

The indictment against the Chicago Eight was brought by a Justice Department headed by the liberal Ramsay Clark, under a very bad law originally directed against civil rights activists. That law makes it a crime to cross a state line for the purpose of fomenting a riot. To prove its case, the Justice Department could not confine itself to proving that some or all of the defendants had publicly proclaimed that they intended to "break up" or "make impossible" the peaceful conclusion of the Democratic Convention in Chicago in 1968. Proof also had to be submitted that the defendants had then participated in concrete acts to further the objectives of the alleged "conspiracy."

Initially, the American Civil Liberties Union and other civil liberties groups sought to have the indictments quashed on the grounds that the law is unconstitutionally vague, or in conflict with the free-speech and assembly guarantees of the First Amendment. Having been denied their motions, the ACLU was told by the defendants that they preferred their own lawyers so that they would be free to conduct their defense in their own way. From that moment on, the trial has been a kind of guerrilla theater in a courtroom setting.

Government evidence purporting to link the defendants to illegal acts or incitements has been produced almost exclusively by planted undercover agents (with assists from uniformed and plainclothes policemen). This kind of thing will be discussed below. In addition, the judge has delivered himself of a number of startling rulings, including some personally against defense counsel which led to an outpouring of statements (and bodies) from all sections of the American bar in outrage at such high-handed treatment of their brethren. One may guess that the higher courts will rule on the basis of procedural defects rather than the constitutional or factual merits of the case.

The Justice Department seems determined to chill the possibility of future "Chicagos" by convicting these defendants. If they succeed, they will chill a lot of wild talk that passes for political discourse, but they may also intimidate people from really expressing serious opinions about political issues. Perhaps the government hopes to distract attention from the fact that whatever the original intentions of some or all the defendants, what happened in Chicago was a "police riot" of the worst kind.

But the defendants—what are they trying to accomplish? Is their real concern with the constitutionality of the law, or proving the police and their stool pigeons guilty of a frame-up? Or in defending the democratic process?

Tom Hayden, at least, has expressed a very different intention for himself, which has been reprinted approvingly by New Left publications:

> We need to expand our struggle to include a total attack on the courts. The court system is just another part of this rigged apparatus that is passed off as "open and impartial." The system is most threadbare within the military and municipal courts, but can be exposed at all levels. There is no reason for us to become submissive at the courtroom door.
>
> The people are the jury. We will win our particular cases as well as the general struggle not by appeals to the Supreme Court or by "deals" with prosecutors but by taking the issues over and over to the public. The power to keep our movement free resides only in the people. [From Hayden's book *Rebellion and Repression.*]

The conduct of the defendants is perhaps explained by Hayden's quotation. Whether they will decline to appeal a conviction to the Supreme Court, only time will tell. But if the trial lasts much longer, the Supreme Court to which they are appealing may have changed so much as to turn Hayden's propaganda into prophecy (see below).

POLICE INFILTRATION AND SURVEILLANCE of radical political organizations is nothing new in this country. Most metropolitan police depart-

* This article was written while the trial (of the "Chicago Seven") was in progress.

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ments have had special "intelligence" or "Red Squads" for decades, and the FBI has spent tens if not hundreds of millions of dollars spying on groups outside the mainstream of American politics. Whether or not they have left critical Democrats and Republicans alone, only future historians will (possibly) be able to tell.

The nature of this activity is such that it is almost impossible to tell whether it has gotten "worse" in recent times. Now that the light of public attention has been focused on this dirty business, all kinds of "startling" revelations will crop up—but they often will be no more than "discoveries" of very old facts.

On January 15, the *New York Times* quoted a former captain in Army intelligence to the effect that his service alone had "nearly 1,000 plainclothes Army investigators" who "keep track of civilian political activity across the country and submit regular reports to a collection headquarters at Fort Holabird, in Baltimore."

"Today," former Captain Pyle continued, "the army maintains files on the membership, ideology, programs, and practices of virtually every activist political group in the country." It publishes a booklet periodically which is an "encyclopedia of profiles of people and organizations who, in the opinion of the intelligence command officials who compile it, might cause trouble for the Army."

According to Pyle, this program got started as late as 1965. It is not clear from his article whether these army sleuths "monitor" "protest politics" solely by attending public meetings and using the files of local police and other agencies, or whether some secretly join the groups involved.

The Secret Service is supposed to protect the President of the United States, members of his family, and other public officials. But recently the Secret Service sent out "Liaison Guidelines" to other law enforcement agencies requesting reports on persons who attempt to "embarrass" high officials, seek redress of imaginary grievances, etc., "make irrational or abusive statements" about office-holders, or take part in "anti-American or anti-U.S. Government demonstrations."

Espionage within traditional radical organizations serves absolutely no legitimate governmental interest and is a total waste of the public money, to boot. I cannot recall that undercover agents ever have played a role in convicting a member of such an organization for an act that was validly illegal. By "validly illegal" I do not mean, of course, purely political acts which were made illegal by the passage of a law banning some kind of communication, such as the Smith Act which makes it illegal to conspire to *advocate* overthrow of the government. People engaging in espionage, sabotage, arson, theft, or attempts to commit such crimes generally avoid active participation in the political life of any organization.

Everything organizations of the "Old Left" planned or did was openly reflected in their publications, for all to read. Even such matters as the size of membership, geographic distribution, strength of influence in other mass organizations, etc. could be estimated with precision sufficient for any valid governmental purpose by such simple devices as reading openly published quotas assigned to branches in fund drives, getting reports on the size of mailings from the post office, attending a few public meetings, etc.

It is quite clear that a few of the most "activist" groups which have sprung up during the past five years do not merely talk about armed guerrilla activity, but actually try to engage in it. This is certainly true of the Minutemen on the Right and of both the Weathermen and some Black Panther groups. The political style now modish in the New Left requires ten times as much big talk as action, yet only the stupid or disingenuous contend that all the charges for planning or executing validly criminal acts are frame-ups.

Still, one may wonder *how much of the hooliganism which passes for political activism is being planned and initiated, led and executed by police spies and infiltrators.* (At least one of the youths arrested for forging tickets and trying to disrupt an L.I.D. banquet last year turned up as a police witness at the Chicago trial!) Police spies have notoriously been inclined to escalate the importance and drama of their assignments by provocation and entrapment. How hard it must be to resist stepping over the line of legality in an ideological environment that glorifies terrorism and violence!

That political infiltration can have a "chilling effect" on the willingness of all but the most courageous (or foolhardy) to join protest movements is obvious. As long as such infiltration is

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being done in the context of a free, hopeful political atmosphere, its effects may be negligible, because only the paranoid will refrain from political activity merely because some reactionary cop may put his name in a file.

The impact of political "intelligence" gathering becomes much stronger when the government gives reason to suspect that it may decide to persecute dissidents, even those who have never dreamed of violating a valid law. With Attorney General Mitchell in power, and Nixon and Agnew to back him up, how paranoid does one have to be to worry a bit about one's membership in the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, or the ACLU?

Thus, it is unnecessary to postulate a significant intensification of police infiltration of radical and liberal groups to recognize that the current political situation has made such infiltration both harder to combat and more deadly to a free political process. It is harder to combat because there is a greater acceptance for such activity filtering down from the highest levels of government; and because the resort to terrorist tactics by even a tiny fraction of the radical movement makes it more difficult for liberals and radicals to argue against *all* police surveillance. The ACLU has urged that all infiltration be subject to a court order (in the same way as a search warrant). But no one can be really comfortable about the degree of sophistication judges will bring to bear on determining the validity of grounds adduced for the procurement of such a warrant.

THE SUPREME COURT, at least for the past decade, has thrown its weight overwhelmingly toward a broadening of the concepts of due process, equal protection, and civil liberties in general. The ACLU and the NAACP Legal and Defense Fund did not win *all* their cases at the highest level, but at times things reached the point at which the competence of civil liberties lawyers could almost be judged by their batting average in victories and defeats.

Now Burger has replaced Warren, President Nixon will appoint a successor to Fortas, and Black and Douglas are the oldest members of the Court. It is quite likely that Nixon will end up by having appointed no less than four justices, and possibly even five, in one term in office. This could turn the whole civil liberties picture around for the next decade.

Our rights and our liberties are not in a happy state, it would seem. The old liberal coalition has fallen apart, and this permits the other side of the American political character to gain dominance. The old labor spy racket, the vigilantes who killed and deported Wobblies, the lynch mobs of the South, all of these could function only with the support, covert or open, of politicians and cops. They were as much a part of the American tradition as were the movements and martyrs they attacked.

Exposure, opposition, outcry against every violation of civil rights and liberties—all are essential. But the devils of political infiltration, the police frame-up, and perhaps even of the romantic terrorist, will be exorcised only by a change in the political climate that replaces fear and discouragement with confidence and hope.

ISAAC A. LANGNAS

1912–1970

We learn with regret of the sudden death of Isaac Langnas, for many years the chief translator for DISSENT. *An accomplished linguist in many languages and an expert translator, Langnas had translated from the Russian the famous essay of Sinyavsky, "On Socialist Realism," originally published in* DISSENT.

Isaac Langnas was a close friend of the magazine. Born in Poland, he came to America as a refugee. His belief in a democratic and humanist form of socialism was matched by his cheerful nature and optimistic outlook, despite a lifetime of difficulties.

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Jervis Anderson

Panthers: Black Men In Extremis

To borrow from the Jews—with somewhat different nuance—it's hard to be a black. For example: an American occupation that, almost from the beginning, came to be identified with the position of black men in the society was that of the Pullman sleeping car porter. Over the years, the pleasure the average white passenger derived from the porter's activities was enhanced enormously by the fact that the porter was black. Where blacks were concerned, the Pullman car was a sort of America on wheels, because, for several decades, the porter service was the highest to which black men in any large numbers were allowed to aspire. It comes as something of a surprise, then, to encounter a woman in one of James Alan McPherson's short stories (published recently in the collection, *Hue and Cry*), who objects strenuously to the presence of a porter in the vicinity of her sleeping compartment because, among other private reasons, "He's black! He's black!" It is the sort of thing which, especially by today's standards, is sufficient to drive even a sleeping car porter into the arms of the Black Panthers.

Considering some of the mythic regions of their minds in which the majority of white Americans react to the word "black"—to say nothing of blackness itself—chances are that whenever they appear frightened or frantic over terms like black power, black revolution, black beauty, or black culture—even black man—they are reacting more to the sound of the adjective than to the sense of the noun, more to the shadow than to the real act. There are some good reasons to believe that if the adjective, or the shadow, were "colored" or "Negro," their response would be considerably milder—and, in one or two instances, perhaps even friendly and helpful. (All of which only appears to strengthen the claim of certain black radicals that there is a difference of serious consequence between energies and values and attitudes that are "black" and those that are "Negro"—and worse, that white America not only perceives this difference well but also exploits it skilfully to its own comfort and advantage. But that is another story.)

If it is hard to be black—meaning the word to apply to the overwhelming number of Americans of African descent—then there is probably nothing more dangerous in America than *acting black,* whatever (considering all the differences of cultural opinion that exist among some of the orthodoxies on the black Left) that presently entails. Perhaps only one thing may be hazarded with a reasonable chance of it turning out to be right, that is to say, endorsed by those who lay down the line for black feeling: it is that acting black is a truthful expression of those vague intuitions into a dim past accumulated from one's antecedents; those shades of feeling, taste, judgment, and outlook that were shaped partly above and partly below the surface of American culture; those experiences that blacks have undergone as well as those visions they perceive of their rightful status in—or outside of—American history. One other thing is fairly certain: whatever acting black may entail in the day-to-day details of social or political living, it can, at any moment of any day or night in America, place one's life or general welfare in serious jeopardy. After all, every act, however simple, that announces a certain conviction in the worth of

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one's blackness is an act of freedom and defiance—a declaration of independence from the cultural intimidation and power of an American sensibility which, from the beginning, has rested largely upon the tastes, memories, prejudices, fears, political and numerical power of the white mainstream. And, as we know, it is in the nature of the arrogance and insecurity of this mainstream sensibility to punish any meaningful black act of independence with one form of American violence or another.

Imagine, then, the situation of the Panthers. Not only are they, to begin with, in the difficult position of being black, and in the immensely perilous position of, in some sense or other, acting black, but—as some of the young men who admire them say—they are also very *bad*: it is scarcely possible for any black man in America to act any blacker, or be more endangered. In their case a part, at least, of being *bad* implies that they do not believe in concealing from their right hand what their left hand has done, is doing, or is about to do; it implies also that, as older people like to say, they do not talk with water in their mouths.

As everyone knows by now—because the Panthers have made it crystal-clear—their politics begin at the mouth of a gun; they are the vanguard movement of an armed black revolution in America; they are committed to driving the police (white *and* black pigs) out of the black communities; and they mean to win the collective black American manhood even "if the earth must be leveled in the attempt." The result of all this, as everyone also knows by now—and perhaps could have predicted—is that the Panthers are locked in a bloody death struggle with the police in several large cities across America; the Panthers have killed some 5 policemen and the police have killed some 15 or 19 Panthers; the top Panther leadership has been decimated: killed, jailed, or driven into exile; scores of Panthers are in prison either serving sentences or awaiting trial; the Assistant Attorney General, the Vice-President, the head of the FBI, and the chief of the Cleveland Fraternal Order of Police are convinced that the Panthers are "hoodlums," "criminals," "a threat to the internal security of the country," and should be "wiped out." Panther headquarters all over the country have been raided and shot up so frequently that leading liberal, libertarian, and civil rights spokesmen have formed an independent commission to inquire into their relations with the police; and the American Civil Liberties Union has expressed the fear that there may be a conscious campaign underway to harass the Panthers out of existence.

WHAT IS ONE TO SAY to all this? At least two obvious things.

The first is that, considering the color of the Panthers, considering the nature of their political mission, the irreverence of their stance, their policy toward the police, and the terminologies in which they couch their hatred and contempt for the police, it is hard to imagine anyone—including the Panthers themselves—being surprised at the way the police have behaved. The very analysis the Panthers have made of the police in the first place suggests the certainty, almost, that they would act the way they have. Obviously, this is not to applaud the police. It is merely to say that those Panthers who are now frantically calling the country's attention to what the police are doing to them must be far more naive than the apparent nature of their enterprise in America led one to believe. As Gordon Haskell of the NYCLU said the other day, "Observers of American police behavior have long been aware that the one single type of criminal who has the least chance of survival through the due process sieve of the law is the actual 'cop killer.' And this has been true, irrespective of the suspect's race, politics, religion or national origin."

The other thing to say is that, despite some of the language that comes out of

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Washington and the precinct houses, despite, even, some of their styles of operation, the Panthers are not simply a bunch of neighborhood thugs but rather are one of the several current expressions of political radicalism in America. And on this basis alone, it is worth observing that the methods of prevention and prosecution that are appropriate to crime are not always appropriate to politics; nor does prosecuting political figures the way one prosecutes criminals make politics a crime. What differentiates the Panthers from other black and white radical groups of not entirely dissimilar persuasions is the unconscionable amount of political energy the Panthers have thought necessary to focus upon the police. This is, as we have suggested, quite foolish; yet precisely this feeds the suspicion of a good many libertarians that some among the police may not only be jumping the gun in their haste to get at the Panthers, but also that they may consider this tactic justified on the grounds that the Panthers are not entitled to a fair shake through "the due process sieve of the law." In addition to the immediate principle of the Panthers' rights, a broader urgency underlies this concern, because if it becomes a relatively easy matter to bypass the "due process sieve" in dealing with the Panthers, then it becomes just as easy to do so in respect, say, to the whole black community in America, which occupies a position in relationship to police whim and power that *ultimately* is not any more advantageous than that occupied by the Panthers.

This brings us to the last point. No one knows better than the Panthers themselves the enormous price they have had to pay for the bravado of their language and their stance. Nor can anyone know better than they know themselves where all of this could lead, how all of it could end. And yet, they go right on. Last December David Hilliard —on whom has fallen the rhetorical duty, if not the mantle, of Eldridge Cleaver—was quoted as saying that they would "kill" Richard Nixon, and only the utter dangerousness of the declaration enabled one to conclude that he must merely have been indulging in metaphor. Though he later cleared up and toned down the remark, there must have been more than a little substance to it, for in early January Cleaver, from his exile in Algeria, told Mike Wallace—in what he indicated to be a quite serious vein—that one of the Panther goals was to shoot their way into the Senate, take off the head of Senator McClellan, and shoot their way out again.

(From a Panther point of view, of course, what Hilliard and Cleaver speak of would constitute exceptionally powerful symbolic and revolutionary acts—even though one perceives in them a certain nostalgia for the gestures of Nat Turner and, in comparison with modern political revolution, the spectacular simplicities of slave revolt; even though one suspects that the task of radically extending and redistributing social justice in America may require a force of inspirations that are broader in range than those that were sufficient to nourish plantation insurrection; and even though one has a fair idea, in any case, of just how long the Panther movement would be able to survive the taking of McClellan's head, to say nothing of Nixon's.)

It is hard to believe that the Panthers persist in such language simply because it may be one of the notions they have of how real revolutionaries are supposed to carry on, or simply because it is the only way they know of demonstrating the seriousness and integrity of their beliefs. It must surely have occurred to them by now that neither zeal nor integrity prevented other revolutionists in other times and places from testing at times the drift of the political wind, and recognizing those moments in the life of their struggle when it was more advantageous to their survival to pass the word surreptitiously rather than shout it from the

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housetops. Not even Nat Turner could have made it as far as he did, if he had operated the way the Panthers do.

WHAT, THEN, IS IT that keeps the Panthers on their collision course? A fair surmise is that the Panthers entertain an image of themselves as the paradigm of the black existence in America—particularly the deferred dream that existence has now bequeathed to a young, restless, energetic, resourceful, and somewhat literate urban underclass. This position offers the Panthers no safety except, if they wish, in opting out; and the way they have chosen to witness to that position promises them no victories except in martyrdom.

If one listens to the Panthers carefully, one discerns in their voices accents one hears only mutedly in the voices of most young black Americans—accents which, by and large, express a determination to set their own schedule and terms for black liberation, and an admiration for the style of a man like Adam Clayton Powell who—regardless of his liabilities as a representative black politician—seems able to walk through America and say and do what he damn well pleases. For almost a century, only a handful of black Americans took their chance of seizing their freedoms that way.

One of the reasons the bulk of black men wouldn't take the chance of trying to be that way was, of course, an innate sense of the jeopardy of their relationship to racist American power. But an equally compelling reason was that they were in the power of a liberal ideology that told them how much they had gained, how much they were gaining, and how much more they would gain by containing their strivings within the tempo of liberal agitation. This, given the limited options that have always been available to the black struggle—or the limited options of which it has availed itself—was not the worst thing black men could have done. But despite the unprecedented activities and advances of the more recent civil rights era, the promises of liberalism concerning the ultimate freedom of blacks have not, or not yet, come true. And on one of the mornings after Selma, a young urban underclass woke up to find out that they really had nothing to lose—the first generation of its kind, as James Baldwin said, that America had produced. Well, the Panthers are it, now—in a political and psychological way they see themselves, in extremis, as the embodiment of all the passions of that generation.

And yet, for the Panthers, this is such an excruciating responsibility. The eyes of all the young blacks are upon them. They are eyeball to eyeball with white America, and, they feel, they will forfeit their position as black exemplars and lose the respect of their contemporaries if they so much as blink. So the Panthers continue going right on, knowing that the boldness of their enterprise is its own reward, and that their triumph—in the eyes of their generation—lies in their martyrdom: murder, maiming, imprisonment, and exile. And that, of course, as much of American history shows—from Paul Robeson to DuBois to Garvey to Malcolm X to Medgar Evers to Martin Luther King—seems to many black youths the way in which the more vigorous and irreverent protagonists of black aspiration in America always go. Even though, it must be said, none of these men made the naked sacrifice of themselves the Panthers seem to be making.

Ultimately it is a terrible waste. One assumes that there is something beyond martyrdom—some shred of social or political good—that the Panthers would like to achieve. After all, a value that, at the very least, is equal to martyrdom, is the wisdom of surviving and getting your work done—assuming, in the case of the Panthers, that there is something worthwhile they would like to do, and that they have some idea of how to do it.

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Thomas R. Brooks

Black Upsurge in the Unions

BLACK UNION ACTIVITY is on the increase. Blacks are organizing new locals among hospital workers, municipal employees, and in the retail and service trades. Black caucuses form at union conventions, and there are national black caucuses within the United Auto Workers, the United Steelworkers, and the American Federation of Teachers, and black rank-and-file rebellions have erupted in the New York and Chicago transit unions. Black pride provides the thrust for black representation within the labor movement as it does in all our institutions.

This thrust gains a lift from a continuing ground swell of black employment in unionized industries and industries ripe for unionization. The number of black workers with seniority and trade union experience has grown, and blacks are no longer automatically last hired and first fired. In 1954, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, out of a total nonwhite work force of 6.3 million, there were 316,000 craftsmen, foremen, and kindred workers; a million nonfarm laborers; 1.3 million operatives and kindred workers. Between 1965 and 1969 the total nonwhite work force rose from slightly over 7.7 million to almost 8.6 million, while the number of black laborers dipped from 985,000 to 859,000, the number of black craftsmen rose from 520,000 to 752,576, and that of black operatives from 1.6 million to 2.1 million. As workers gain seniority, they tend to move upward, out of the ranks of the unskilled into those of the semiskilled and skilled. As the figures above indicate, this is happening to an increasing number of black workers.

There are, unfortunately, no precise figures on black trade union membership. AFL-CIO spokesmen estimate that 2 million out of a total membership of almost 14 million are black. There are another 500,000 or perhaps 750,000 blacks in unions affiliated with the 3 million-member teamsters', auto and chemical workers' union, the American Labor Alliance. Where black workers are to be found in concentrated numbers still remains a guess. Two small unions, the 6,000-member Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and the 3,000-member United Transport Service Employees, are virtually all black. The powerful 450,000-member Laborers' International Union and the 50,000-member International Longshoremen's Association are about 40 percent black. Some 45 AFL-CIO unions have "substantial" black memberships—that is, a larger percentage of black members than the 11–12 percent rate of black participation in the labor force.

To give a few examples: the State, County and Municipal Employees (250,000), the merged Meatcutters–Packinghouse Union (488,000), Letter Carriers (168,000), Postal Clerks (139,000), International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union (440,000), Building Service Employees International Union (398,000), the Laundry Workers (25,000), possibly the Steelworkers (1.1 million), and the American Federation of Teachers (140,-

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000) are among unions with 20 percent or more black memberships.

So far, between-convention black caucuses exist in only three major unions—those of the auto workers, the steelworkers, and the teachers.[1] This may reflect the state of accommodation to rising black memberships within the unions. Blacks have been active since the founding of the Packinghouse Workers, and three blacks sit on the executive board of the Meatcutters now merged with them. The Longshoremen have had black vice-presidents for some time now, and the Laborers' union, as several other unions, now also has a black vice-president. Two black labor leaders, A. Philip Randolph of the Sleeping Car Porters and Frederick O'Neal, president of Actors' Equity, sit on the AFL–CIO executive council.

Another key activity among black trade unionists is a growing involvement in political action. Norman Hill, associate director of the A. Philip Randolph Institute, says that the response among black trade union activists to the Institute's political education programs has been "tremendous." The Institute has set up a new regional office in Chicago, with Maida Springer Kemp as field director, and it now plans to open offices in other black trade union centers around the country. "We're not a caucus in the sense of engaging in internal union politics," Hill told me, "Our main focus is on COPE activity, but we also recognize the thrust toward black representation. The black-labor alliance will only work politically if there is black representation on all levels of the COPE decision-making apparatus." The Institute probably reaches more black unionists than any other single national organization. It may yet have a greater impact on black participation in the labor movement than most of the developments featured in the liberal and Left press.

The relative absence of widespread black-caucus activity at the national level reflects the present level of black power or consciousness, the absence of a dramatic issue to pull people together, and the difficulty of doing so when memberships are widely scattered. Within the Building Service Employees International Union, for example, blacks participate within the local unions as local leaders and on local organizing and service staffs. Last year, several ex-BSEIU staff members joined a rival Teamsters-sponsored organizing drive, drew up a bill of complaint against the BSEIU, and circulated it among BSEIU activists as "black demands." So far, this brief flyer at black caucus activity has not taken root, partly because of the difficulty in pulling together a diffuse rank and file.

BLACK CAUCUSES IN THE TRADE UNIONS are still a new development. They cannot be understood apart from a specific industry, union, and in some instances a specific city in which they are found. Within the American Federation of Teachers, which has a tradition of caucus activity, the Black Caucus enjoys the quasi-official standing afforded each of the other three major caucuses in the union—the majority, proadministration Progressive Caucus, the conservative National Caucus, and the New Caucus which considers itself to the Left of the other two. Perhaps because all these older caucuses are integrated, or because the New Caucus had preempted the role of black spokesman, it was not until the 1969 AFT convention in New Orleans that a caucus was formed on the basis that "everybody black ought to belong." Chaired by Zeline Richard of Detroit, the AFT Black Caucus draws its chief strength from black teacher

[1] For my report on the United Auto Workers, see "DRUMbeats in Detroit," DISSENT, January–February 1970. The League of Revolutionary Black Workers (the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement, et al.) is a sect with factions in several auto plants. The Trade Union Leadership Committee has been in existence for over ten years and has successfully fought for black representation in the top councils of the auto union.

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activists in Chicago, Detroit, and New York.[2]

At the 1969 AFT convention, the Black Caucus drew up a list of questions, which was considered at a hastily-summoned executive council meeting. "We recognize that blacks, by virtue of their history, have legitimate and special concerns," AFT President David Selden told delegates. "The AFT leadership will respond calmly and in good faith." On the whole, the union leadership seems to have done so. The Black Caucus, angered by a refusal of two bars to serve black delegates, wanted to know: "Why, instead of taking some affirmative action in protest, did the AFT set up a study commission to evaluate the indignities suffered in New Orleans by many black delegates to this convention?" After hearing the commission's findings, the convention picketed the two bars, and the executive council of the AFT maintained an all-night vigil.

The Black Caucus raised questions about such issues as community control of schools, employment opportunities on the AFT staff, minority representation on policy-making bodies in big-city locals, and AFT support for black teachers punitively transferred following the 1969 strike in New Orleans. The Caucus further asked for a special meeting with the AFT Executive Council, which took place in December 1969.[3]

While in the AFT relations between the leadership and the Black Caucus appear amicable, this cannot be said of their counterparts in the Steelworkers. Black steelworkers picketed the 1968 steel union convention in Chicago, and there was a sharp debate on the convention floor over black representation on the union's executive board, which consists of 3 executive officers and 30 district directors—all white. All these officers are elected every four years by a membership referendum. At the convention, the Ad Hoc Committee, the black caucus within the Steelworkers, proposed the institution of a second vice-presidency, to be held by a black.

The proposal was overwhelmingly defeated, largely on the grounds that such a post would be "appointive" rather than elective. Steelworkers' President I. W. Abel drew applause when he declared, "I didn't hold office all these years as a Welshman, but as a steelworker elected to office." Vice-President Joseph P. Molony summed up the

[2] There are black separatist groups among the Chicago and New York teachers, but they have not had much success in wooing teachers away from the union. Currently, so far as I can discover, they confine their activity to the promotion of Afro-American history courses, the teaching of Swahili, and the like. In New York City, where the Afro-American Teachers gained support among black teachers and also some notoriety as a result of the school decentralization hassle, little has been heard from these militants in recent months. This may be because the decentralized black Ocean Hill-Brownsville school district "fired" key leaders —Albert Vann, now teaching elsewhere, and Leslie Campbell, who is building a private black-separatist school in Brooklyn.

[3] *The American Teacher,* in its October 1969 and January 1970 issues, carried full accounts of convention developments and of the special meeting. The AFT provided airfare and hotel and living expenses for a five-member Black Caucus delegation to the December meeting. Some of the Council's answers to the Black Caucus may be of interest: in the New Orleans matter, the Council reported full support of the penalized strikers and cited the assumption of two-thirds of the $5,367 in legal costs incurred so far. As to staff, there are 3 blacks among the 12 persons employed in the organizing department—a director of field services, a national representative, and an apprentice organizer. The last vacancy on the national representatives' staff was filled by a black.

The AFT council is considering guidelines in order to guarantee minority representation on big-city locals, and it has reaffirmed its commitment to the AFT's 1968 decentralization resolution, which urged AFT assistance to communities that are seeking responsibility for educational decision-making, keeping in mind teacher tenure and due process. At the December meeting, the Black Caucus asked for an increase in the AFT's civil-rights staff and requested that no speaker be invited to the union's next convention in Pittsburgh who did not support that city's United Coalition demands for improved skilled-trades apprenticeship opportunities for minority groups. This issue, however, isn't likely to become acute until preparations are made for the next convention, and indeed may be moot by then depending on how well the agreement between the building trades and the black community to provide 1250 jobs works out.

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prevailing view: "We are opposed to any procedure that would establish an office in our union based on race, national origin, religion, or color. This would be a form of Jim Crowism in reverse and contrary to our rigidly-enforced policy of nondiscrimination." So it would be—yet this view ignores certain realities. As one member of the National Ad Hoc Committee put it, "Sure, it's best for a Negro to be elected, but there's not much chance of that. Since there isn't, one should be appointed." Balanced tickets are not exactly unheard of in American politics, nor within the steel union where ethnic politics often play a lively role at local and district levels. As I read the 1968 convention debate, black delegates were simply asking recognition of that political fact. "Create a new office and name a black to fill it on the administration slate," was, in essence, what they said. Black steelworker Raymond Freeman said:

> We can understand what you are talking about when you say run for the office, but you also understand . . . that you control the circle from which we have to run, and in order to break this crust there must be a place for us to run. In order to run we are asking you now to give us the second place on the ticket and we will assure you that we will put a Negro in office.

There is some question as to black strength within the union. The Ad Hoc Committee claims that 20–25 percent of the union's 1.1 million members are black; union spokesmen cite industry figures that suggest that 16 percent or roughly 200,000 members are black. According to Richard L. Rowan's study of Negro employment in the *basic* steel industry in the October 1969 issue of *Industrial and Labor Relations Review,* out of a total blue-collar work force of 361,995 in 1966, 58,273 or 16.1 percent were black. Operatives—that is, semi-skilled workers—comprised 37.1 percent of all employees in basic steel. Of these 172,683 workers, 30,719, or 17.8 percent were black in 1966. Out of 69,807 laborers or unskilled workers, 19,356, or 27.7 percent were black. Of 111,047 craftsmen in the industry, 6,586 or 5.9 percent are black. Yet, while heavy concentrations of black steelworkers exist in Baltimore, Birmingham, Chicago, Detroit, and elsewhere, there are no predominantly black steel-union districts.

Conceivably, the union might carve out a new district, as the UAW has done, to expand its executive board and ensure the election of a black. But this, so far, has not seemed politically feasible. Such a division would cut into the power of the district director affected, and the blacks in the union simply do not yet have the political muscle to move the leadership in that direction. However, the Abel-Burke-Molony administration has shown some awareness of the need for black representation at top policy levels of the union. When the director of the Baltimore District 8 retired, they saw an opportunity. There are 38,000 steelworkers in this district; most of them work for Bethlehem Steel, and 35–37 percent are black. Leander Sims, a black Steelworker union representative, ran against Edward Plato with the full backing of the Abel administration. Sims lost, by a bit more than 1,500 votes. Fewer than 10,000 members voted, even though there was both a district and a national union contest. Abel himself barely won the district, and it is clear that Sims lost because black steelworkers didn't come out to vote for him in the expected numbers. Since then, Sims has been appointed assistant director of the district.

The National Ad Hoc Committee played only a small role in the Sims-Plato contest: it had no rank-and-file backing in the district. The Committee, founded in 1964, has a simple, three-point program that does not seem to have broad mass appeal. Drafted by Aaron H. Jackson of Detroit and Rayfield Mooty of Chicago, the program calls for:

(1) Negroes on the Executive Board;

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(2) full integration at all levels within the various districts and national offices as department heads and in policy-making;
(3) reorganization of the Civil Rights Department.

In sharp contrast to DRUM, whose members are under thirty and fresh to employment in the auto industry, the steelworkers' Ad Hoc Committee consists largely of older men with considerable trade union experience. Jackson has been active as a negotiator, shop steward, and local officer for over 20 years. Mooty was a charter member of his aluminum local union, and has been shop steward and president during his 30-odd years of union service. The Ad Hoc Committee meets twice a year; it drew 350 to its last meeting at Gary, Indiana, in July 1969.

The Committee supported Abel against David McDonald in the 1965 steel union elections, and as a result secured a commitment from Abel to make changes in the union's hiring and promotional policies. Mooty grumbled to me about a lack of meetings with leaders of the union, but conceded that there had been some changes. The Ad Hoc Committee, he said, won Point Three, the reorganization of the union's Civil Rights Department, now headed by a black, Alex Fuller, and some gains under Point Two. Although Mooty retains his militancy, the Ad Hoc Committee, I would judge, has lost some of its zest. A number of its key activists are now on the union staff, and there doesn't seem to be any sizable steam building up behind the one remaining point still demanded in the Ad Hoc Committee's program.[4] This, I suspect, reflects the political realities in the union: the present officers have another three years to go before elections; a constitutional amendment that would open a spot for a black has little chance of success in the interim; all that remains is to wait for a director to retire in a district where a black would have a reasonable shot at election.

BLACK CAUCUSES IN THE STEEL AND TEACHERS' UNIONS are a consequence of the overall rise in the level of black consciousness—but, so to speak, at one remove. For an insight into the relationship between developments in the black community and within the unions, one must look to the cities where black workers live and work. The spectrum of black involvement in the labor movement ranges from black agitation aimed at opening up jobs in the construction industry to the organization of hospital and municipal employees. Without black community pressure, for example, there would be no offer from the Chicago building trades of 4,000 jobs over the next year, including apprenticeships, journeyman status and openings for training; nor would the recent trade union successes among hospital workers in Charleston or among municipal employees in Memphis have been possible without black community support. Black-caucus activity in such cities as Detroit, Chicago, and New York fall somewhere between these two forms of community involvement.

On reflection, however, I would place the Rank-and-File Committee for a Democratic Union, of the Transport Workers Union's New York City Local 100, among traditional left-wing caucuses rather than among

[4] I am intrigued by the absence of any complaint about discrimination in the plants or local unions, both in the Ad Hoc Committee's program and in my conversations with Committee members. When questioned, however, the Committee's spokesmen did acknowledge the existence of discrimination. In contrast, this kind of complaint invariably tumbled out in the first rush of words from black auto workers, whether DRUMites or members of the more traditional black caucuses in UAW Detroit locals. I don't want to take time to prove the point, but I suspect it has something to do with the history and nature of each of the two unions. To be sure, grievances aplenty exist in steel mills, but they don't seem to have that persistent, burr-under-the-saddle quality of grievances caused by the assembly line.

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new black caucus groups. Many of its leaders are old-time leftwingers within the union, and in 1965 four out of six candidates for top office on the Committee's slate against the leadership of the Local were white. Last year, the group decided to challenge TWU's bargaining rights, and collected some 7,000 signatures calling for a representation election—some 2,000 short of the number needed. Among other things, the Rank-and-File Committee charged that TWU failed to represent its black and Puerto Rican members. According to Joseph S. Carnegie, a black conductor with 20 years' service with the New York City Transit Authority, roughly 70 percent of the Transit Authority's 28,000 employees are black or Puerto Rican. (A TA spokesman told me he estimates it at 50 percent.) The Rank-and-File Committee membership is said to be 90 percent black and Puerto Rican, which by itself is not sufficient to tag the group as either a black caucus or black separatist. As Carnegie wrote to the *New York Times,* "We welcome white participation both in leadership and membership in this struggle; we have never opposed it. We are not a black separatist group; we seek change for all workers." The Rank-and-File Committee's attorney, David Lubash, assured me that the group is pushing ahead with its drive for decertification of TWU. But, as yet, they do not have anywhere near enough valid signatures, and I suspect that the precontract negotiation blues, which enabled them to gather as many as they did, are no longer sung so loudly on the City's transportation lines. TWU secured a good contract over the Christmas holidays.

DEVELOPMENTS IN CHICAGO are radically different from anything currently observable in New York, and somewhat different from what goes on in Detroit. Chicago politics sets the scene, and one should keep in mind that black politics in Chicago differ in style from black politics elsewhere. The Daley machine and its black counterpart, the machine of Congressman William L. Dawson, cast a long shadow.[5] Like the black community, black organized labor divides politically into various components, notably the old AFL and some CIO unions, strongly tied to the Daley/Dawson machines, while the UAW, Packinghouse Workers, and other liberal unions support reform efforts. Significantly, the latter endeavors have been rooted in Chicago's black precincts, ever since Willoughby Abner, now a vice-president of the American Arbitration Association and formerly of the UAW staff, challenged the Democratic party machine in the 1950 primary election to decide the party's candidate for state senator. Abner lost, but the UAW has been engaged in precinct work in the black community ever since, sometimes supporting Democratic regulars and at other times white and black dissidents.[6]

The machine-reform constellation not only dominates Chicago politics; it also influences the current rise in black-worker activism in the community and among the unions. As in Detroit and other urban areas in the North, Chicago unions are experiencing, on one hand, a sharp rise in black rank and file and, on the other, the continuation in leadership of the preceding white, often ethnically-conscious, generation

[5] But as James Q. Wilson perceptively pointed out in *Negro Politics* (1960): "the Dawson machine is not a simple replica—albeit a highly successful one—of any political machine; it is a *Negro* [current parlance, *black*] machine, and many of the incentives and constraints to which it responds can only be understood by the fact of its being Negro." This is also profoundly true of the black opposition to Dawson. The black liberal challenge to the Dawson machine creates a black community conflict; it is not a simple reflection of the labor/liberal *vs.* Daley struggles. Actually, the latter are a pale reflection of the former.

[6] Although the UAW and the Packinghouse Workers now work together, neither has quite forgotten the past. Some Packinghouse locals failed to come through for Abner because of his anti-Stalinism, and because of this, subtle important political differences exist to this day within the liberal/labor coalition. Not only in Chicago, I might add.

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of unionists. Unlike other cities, however, Chicago is the best example of the new black community involvement in trade-union affairs.

Black community leaders, however tentatively, have given advice to black workers and have been drawn into the internal affairs of several key unions. Moreover, a fair number of black trade union activists have been drawn into orbit, so to speak, around the charismatic Rev. Jesse Jackson and his Operation Breadbasket.

OPERATION BREADBASKET was launched several years ago, following the late Martin Luther King's frustrating Chicago summer. As an arm of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Operation Breadbasket feeds the hungry, boycotts for jobs, encourages black self-help, and engages in a variety of antipoverty endeavors. In Chicago Operation Breadbasket has become an institution, and enjoys a *succèss d'estime*—largely through the dynamism of the Rev. Jackson. "He's a phenomenon," is how a black trade unionist described the energetic director of Operation Breadbasket to me. Two or three thousand people turn out every weekend to hear him preach, and at times to boycott or march at his behest. Understandably, black workers frequently turn to him when in need of advice or support.

To a trade unionist, the consequences often seem contradictory. Operation Breadbasket, for example, supported a group of Cook County hospital workers, members of AFSCME (American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees), who walked out in the course of a jurisdictional fight with the BSEIU (Building Service Employees International Union). Earlier, Operation Breadbasket leaders had urged black teachers not to support an AFT strike, and subsequently urged them to withdraw from the union altogether. (In Chicago suburbs, black teachers are among the most militant supporters of AFT organizing drives.) Like many black activists, Operation-Beadbasket ministers see the unions as a mixed blessing.[7] As Rev. Calvin Morris, shepherd of Operation Breadbasket's trade-union flock, told striking hospital workers, "Much of the labor movement is obese, fat and tired. . . . Yet, the Lord never leaves us comfortless; even in the midst of fat-cat unions, we still see some light shining."

Operation Breadbasket is community-oriented, and though political in black-powerish fashion (the Rev. Jackson is said to have political ambitions), it has not injected itself into the unions, as would-be radicals often dream of doing, and as such politicals as the DRUMites and Black Panthers are doing in a small way.[8] Rather, Operation Breadbasket is drawn in when dissidents are in trouble and need outside support. This, at least, seems to be the case with Chicago's rebel bus drivers.

Back in early 1968, a group of black bus drivers decided to challenge the white lead-

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[7] The UAW, after all, is a heavy supporter of Operation Breadbasket. Teachers too, black and white, contribute as individuals to Operation Breadbasket. Significantly, the Breadbasket teachers dropped their withdrawal plea, and their current anti-unionism has an old-fashioned schoolmarm ring. As one young lady told me, "We get all the benefits anyway." Their current interest is in improving education for black children.

It is also important to note that the last negotiations in Chicago eased, if they did not remove entirely, one major black teachers' grievance. Many of the black teachers are temporary appointees and, until the current contract, were unable to move beyond the first pay grade. Now they can go up several, at $250 each jump, and after three years they may be permanently appointed without examination if their work is satisfactory.

[8] Here one might mention the Black Labor Federation, which announced to the press in fall 1968 that it was considering calling a one-day general strike of black workers. The initial get-together was impressive. Among those present were spokesmen for the Concerned Transit Workers, fresh from a 20-day wildcat strike; the Afro-American Employees Committee at Hotpoint, veterans of a one-day sit-down; Steelworkers who had mounted pickets at the 1968 Chicago steel union convention; and the Concerned Construction Workers. But the Federation apparently survives only in fervid references in the New Left press.

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ership of the local union, the 12,000-member (3,500 retirees and 8,500 working members) Division 241 of the Amalgamated Transit Union, AFL–CIO. In the street-car era, the local was almost entirely white but in recent years the Chicago Transit Authority has hired more and more blacks. Now roughly 72 percent of the 6,800 bus drivers are black, but on taking into account the other CTA workers represented by the local, the racial breakdown is roughly 60 percent black, 40 percent white. The leadership of the local, however, continued predominantly white. All the top officers were white—president, two vice-presidents, a recording secretary, and a financial secretary—and out of 26 executive board members only four were black.

At first, the Concerned Transit Workers concentrated on the issue of representation. As one spokesman, Wayman Benson, put it, "This is nothing different than the old plantation system. Here you have a union with about 65–70 percent blacks and the leadership is virtually all white. How long do you think we can stand for this?" Black workers turned up in growing numbers to protest a union rule that allows pensioneers to vote, only to be constantly ruled out of order. The provision is in the international union's constitution; but this did nothing to ease black suspicions that the nearly all-white pensioners tended to vote as a bloc for the present administration. With negotiations in the offing, the CTW also began agitating about the mishandling of grievances and demanded cleaner and safer buses, uniform allowances and improved sick leave and hospitalization plans.

The insurgent blacks called two walkouts in 1968—a four-day one in July and a 20-day, knock-down drag-out affair beginning the day before the Democratic Convention and lasting until mid-September. Operation Breadbasket provided counsel and office space for the strikers. An injunction helped break the strike; over 140 drivers were suspended, and 42 were fired. At this point, the CTW changed its goal. As Wayman Benson put it, "We felt we had run into a stone wall and so we decided to try and form an independent union." Robert Cavins, 31, a driver with five and a half years experience, was named temporary president of the regrouped CTW. Operation Breadbasket pledged its continuing support, and a drive was launched for signatures demanding a representative election.

Soon, however, everything bogged down. Illinois has no state labor relations system, and the National Labor Relations Board has no jurisdiction over local transportation systems. There is no legal mechanism for calling a representation election, and any other way of gaining representation rights is forestalled by circumstances. For one thing, Division 241 did not simply sit back. "We have not been in the union business all these years for nothing," said one officer. "There are a lot of problems to be considered when people try to pull out and start their own union. We have no intention of giving up without a fight." Division 241 President James J. Hill named blacks as second vice-president, assistant recording secretary, assistant financial secretary-treasurer, and to four board posts. The militants greeted the appointments with customary derision—"tokenism," "Uncle Toms," etc. Yet, the appointments were not without effect, and a number of black drivers believe it is a matter of time before they take over anyway. As one driver told me, "Why throw away all that's been built up all these years?" Moreover, the CTW, in attempting to take black bus drivers from Division 241, opposed what nearly everyone conceded would be the sure ratification of a new contract in 1969. Quite legitimately, the CTW might have claimed credit for the $4-an-hour settlement—after all, wildcats are an index of militancy—while pointing out inadequacies in the new agreement. But by blasting what the workers by and large

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saw as gains, the CTW began to lose its following.

Several black trade union leaders told me privately that they blamed "the ministers" for the CTW loss. (In fairness, I would credit the understandable impatience—and lack of experience—among the CTW rank and file and leadership, too.) "They had a case," one black leader told me, "but they blew it." He thought the second wildcat a serious mistake, and the decision to break away catastrophic. "The struggle for black representation within 241," he added, "had the support of other trade unionists, and could have been won." Charles Hayes, a vice-president of the merged Butcher Workmen, Meatcutters, and Packinghouse unions and chairman of the newly formed Operation Breadbasket Black Labor Leaders of Chicago, felt he had to support the CTW strike. "I'm still hopeful that the leadership situation can be cleared from within," he told me.

Those who hold this view cite the December 1969 elections within a sister local, Division 308 of the Amalgamated Transit Union, which represents 3,800 rapid transit workers in Chicago. Leonard Beatty, 45, a black motorman with 18 years on the job, defeated John A. Burns, a 43-year motorman and former president of the local, by a vote of 1,124 to 1,098. Four other black men were elected to the Division's nine-man executive board. However, Hugh Hegarty defeated black candidate Clarence Knox for secretary-treasurer, the only other full-time office. As Beatty told reporters, "It was two Irishmen against two blacks; one each was elected." Neither Beatty nor Burns is certain whether blacks comprise a majority of Division 308's membership. There is, however, a parallel with the racial balance within Division 241 of the Amalgamated Transit Union, and it seems likely that a majority of the working members are black while a majority of the retirees are white. Burns, who returned to his job as a motorman, attributes his defeat to the generation gap. "They wanted a young man and so I'm on the way out." He also said that race was not voiced during the campaign, "although I'm sure it was on peoples' minds."

Beatty's victory, in a way, is one of the consequences of the bus drivers' wildcat strike. Beatty and his supporters decided to challenge Burns at the time of the wildcat in August 1968. "We've been preparing a long time to assert ourselves legally," Beatty said. "I never believed in wildcat strikes. But I would like to think this was a victory not just for blacks but for younger workers, for a better deal."

Both in transit and among teachers, Operation Breadbasket adherents did try for a time to pull their black fellow workers out of long-established unions, but both efforts have pretty much subsided. CTW's case for an election and for reinstatement of those fired is being pressed in the courts. Some of those fired have formed a bus company of their own, doing charter work. Others have found, as one told me, "better jobs."

Recently, some black trade unionists of some 25–30 unions formed the Black Labor Leaders of Chicago under the aegis of Operation Breadbasket. Most of them are local union officers, and a number are black staff people. They meet regularly, and are still in the process of formulating concrete programs and goals. "We do try to help Operation Breadbasket," Charles Hayes, chairman of the group, told me, "but our prime concern is to move the trade union movement into some positive direction, some implementation of the things we've talked about over the years both in terms of employment and of leadership within the union movement itself."

Hayes, at least, takes a dim view of a break-away-from-the-unions tendency among black workers, though he believes the tactic may have some validity in specific situations. "We think that you work within, fight within the unions to bring about the

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kind of change that you want, rather than to try going off and form a counterforce." The building trades, however, might be an exception. "If the construction unions' attitudes are not changed, they leave black people no alternative but to form a counterforce, a separate organization in order to train themselves and to get the jobs to which they are entitled." He agreed that the Chicago Plan, which hopefully will bring 4,000 blacks into the building and construction trades, was a victory. But he added, "I think the policing of this agreement is going to be a continuing struggle." When asked if this isn't what collective bargaining is about, Hayes laughed, "Yes, that's it."

At the time of my interview in mid-December, Hayes stressed the importance of mustering support for the GE strikers: "There are some black people being cut to pieces, black and white people in this strike. . . . If we don't concern ourselves with changing this kind of attitude [GE's take-it-or-leave-it stand], this is obviously going to affect every trade unionist—black and white." Hayes also indicated that his group intended to get deeper into political action. While he expressed a willingness to work with COPE on voter registration drives and the like, he pointedly declared, "We have reached a point of maturity where we as black people can no longer rubber-stamp for COPE necessarily. I think we must support candidates based on their commitments to the needs of the total community, not just on the basis of political expediency."

IS THE CHICAGO EXPERIENCE *sui generis* or a harbinger of things to come? A little of both. There is only one Rev. Jackson; a human dynamo. He holds together much that might otherwise fly apart. Then, there are the Chicago political machines, refusing to die in the face of liberal onslaughts.

What happens, of course, depends in part on white reaction. Racism exists among white trade unionists, but I would not say that the efforts of white union officers to continue in office despite significant shifts in the racial composition of their locals are simply racist or a manifestation of white backlash. Some of the response is just an ordinary political wish to hold power.

White workers, true, are often resentful of the change; they don't react politely to being called "Honkie," and the surfacing of subterranean racism is not unknown. I have a leaflet before me, distributed by the National Socialist White People's [Nazi] party at a Harvester plant, which says, among other things: "Not content to take our jobs away, these Black savages have beaten our kids in school, terrorized our women on the street and run us out of our own neighborhoods where we grew up and raised our families." There's no denying some think like this, but in fact few heed the call of this hate sheet. The membership of the NSWPP is probably smaller than that of HRUM at Harvester (Harvester Revolutionary Union Movement), and both are tiny indeed.

Polarization has occurred, but blue-collar Wallaceism is a response to developments outside the plant or the union. The Flint UAW local that endorsed Wallace (and later rescinded the endorsement) did not go on to adopt resolutions favoring the exclusion of black workers from the plant or the union. A black UAW representative who was elected a shop steward in that same local told Brendan Sexton that several of his strongest white supporters wore Wallace buttons during the 1968 Presidential campaign. When Sexton asked if they were still friends and supporters, he said, "Hell, yes." There will be more "two Irishmen against two blacks" contests within our unions, but if blue-collar Wallaceism grows it will be because of social and economic developments outside the unions and not because of hotly fought elections within. If this is not the case, then the unions are indeed in a bad way.

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I don't believe they are. One would let it go at that if it were not for the deplorable tendency among academics, New Leftists, and others to see all elections which blacks lose as stolen. It happens—but not as often as some think. By and large, most union officers continue in office because they do a job, and not because of their ethnic origin or color. These factors play a role, but ordinarily not to the exclusion of all others. Human passions being what they are, one ought to add a cautionary note. The unions have not been hit as hard by black militancy as have the churches, the poverty programs, and the universities. When and if they are, there may well be an intensification of racial hostilities. (My feeling that this won't happen is based on two things. First, it hasn't happened although there are more black trade unionists than black parishioners in the churches under attack or black students in assaulted universities. Second, white workers just aren't loaded with the guilt feelings of white ministers and other middle-class types who are, for good or bad, vulnerable to supermilitancy.)

What will the impact be of increasing black representation in the unions? Progress, of course, but first allow me some skepticism. I am sure that some of the black youngsters now entering building-trades apprenticeships will end up running local unions—or become contractors. The building trades may swing a little as a result, but I doubt very much that the inherently conservative character of those unions will change. Black craftsmen will find, as white craftsmen did before them, that a tight rein on jobs, on entry and craft structure pays off. And they too will want buildings built, a feeling shared with the dominant real estate interests of every city. More blacks, perhaps, will add weight to the discernible sea change already underway among building tradesmen, away from the Republican party to the Democrats. Beyond this, one's hopes ought not rise. . . .

Nonetheless, greater black participation in the unions will reinvigorate social unionism. Many white workers, especially those in powerful unions and in well-organized industries, are content to leave job questions to the unions, while seeking solutions to social and economic problems elsewhere. This, as much as anything, explains blue-collar Wallaceism and conservative voting of home-owning workers on local tax-supported issues. Black workers are no more exempt from the pulls of class solidarity in the plant—and the pride of home-ownership—than white workers. But, on balance, they do want more government action along a broader front than their blue-collar white fellows. Black workers live in communities with drastic problems that cry out for radical solutions. And they are going to use all the resources at their command to get answers to their problems. Local union leadership is a power base, and if that base can be mobilized for action to solve community problems black labor leaders are going to act. It'll be worth watching.

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Eugene Goodheart

The *New York Review*: A Close Look

THE EDITORIAL CREDO of the *New York Review of Books,* which began publication in February 1963, was what one might expect of a highbrow journal.

> . . . Neither time nor space . . . have been spent on books which are trivial in their intentions or venal in their effects, except occasionally to reduce a temporarily inflated reputation or to call attention to a fraud. . . .

Almost immediately it achieved its modest though difficult ambition of becoming the only serious review of books in America. Against middlebrow art and taste, the *NYR* insisted on the necessity of making intellectually and aesthetically scrupulous judgments and of being invidious and dismissive when necessary—which was often, given the plenitude of bad and mediocre works. The fault of the *New York Times Book Review* (which in part provoked the existence of the *NYR*) was that it showed an undiscriminating hospitality to books good and bad.

The high, dismissive tone of the *NYR,* especially in its first two years, was an equivocal virtue. On the negative side, the reviews tended to be self-congratulating and condescending, and the acrimony in the correspondence columns often went beyond the bounds of normal intellectual aggressiveness. One sensed from the beginning an editorial impulse to exhibit the reviewer at the expense of revealing the book. The review was to be so impressive, it might even satisfy the appetite for the book itself. Or the writer might prefer to be reviewed by the *NYR* to the simple pleasure of being read. The writer and his book were always in danger of becoming a mere occasion or object for use. David Levine's destructive caricatures of writers with their large heads and little bodies —a traditional denigrating device of cartooning—are perfectly appropriate to this attitude. Moreover, there was an in-group atmosphere to the magazine, which encouraged "provincial" paranoia about the New York literary establishment. On the positive side, the reviewers exercised that capacity for discrimination and judgment which is the best of highbrowism. And if their reviewing was often refractory, that was in part because reviewing became an exercise in thought, not a mindless report on the contents of a book. It was also in part a matter of style. The style of a book reveals its intelligence, its grasp of truth. The reviewer must cultivate style in his sensitivity to the style under review—and therefore inevitably call attention to himself.

The lead article in the first issue was a review by F. W. Dupee of James Baldwin's *The Fire Next Time,* which caught the strengths and weaknesses of Baldwin's politics through a perception of his style. "When Baldwin replaces criticism with prophesy, he manifestly weakens his grasp of his role, his style and his great theme itself." And Dupee goes on to demonstrate this: " 'White Americans do not believe in death, and this is why the darkness of my skin so intimidates them.' " (Baldwin.) "But suppose one or two white Americans are *not* intimidated, suppose someone coolly asks what it means to believe in death." (Dupee.) " 'The real reason that non-violence is considered to be a virtue in Negroes . . . is that white men do not want their lives, their self-image or their property threatened.' " (Baldwin.) "Of course they don't, especially their lives. Moreover this imputing of 'real reasons' for

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the behavior of entire populations is self-defeating, to put it mildly. . . ." (Dupee.) (Again Baldwin:) " 'In order to survive as a human, moving, moral weight in the world, America and all the Western nations will be forced to reexamine themselves and release themselves from many things that are now taken to be sacred, and to discard nearly all assumptions that have been used to justify their lives and their crimes so long.' " Dupee remarks: "Since whole cultures have never been known to 'discard nearly all their assumptions' and yet remain intact, this amounts to saying that any essential improvement in Negro-White relations, and thus in the quality of American life, is unlikely." By "coolly" asking what it means to believe in death, by catching Baldwin out in his exhortation to White America that it "discard nearly all [its] assumptions," Dupee is effectively deflating the pretensions of the apocalyptic political style.

Dupee's review is especially illuminating when one considers the achievement of the *NYR*, because it helps mark the distance the journal has come from its original attitudes. *The Fire Next Time* is a document of the emerging apocalyptic radicalism. Dupee responds in characteristic highbrow fashion. He is dispassionate, intelligently discriminating, sensitive to style, graceful, but without any strong political commitment.

It is the style of the unpolitical fifties, to which the *NYR* is heir. Its political rationale is that the truth is too complex and elusive to be contained by simple activist formulas. This commitment to "the complex truth" was honorable when sincere and necessary for resisting Stalinist distortions of political reality; but it was reprehensible when it became an evasion of unambiguous evils in our society, as it did in the denial by "revisionist" liberals in the fifties and early sixties that poverty was a substantial fact in this country. The civil rights movement in the late fifties and early sixties created a new activist atmosphere in the intellectual life of the country, and the sudden escalation of the war in Vietnam in 1965 became a main cause for the "radicalizing" of people of "moderate" persuasion. The attitude toward apocalyptic activism, that is exemplified by Dupee's review, becomes increasingly more difficult to maintain. The *NYR* simply changed with the times, reflecting the political evolution of a large portion of the intellectual and academic community.

I. F. Stone, the American journalist with a special gift for telling the untold story, is among the first to note "a steady degeneration in the conduct of the war." (April 22, '65.) The real focus of his article is on the government's unwillingness to tell the truth about the war, which Stone rightly sees as a challenge to the citizen's freedom of information, and consequently to his freedom of deciding and correcting policy through his elected representatives. In 1965 the truth is not entirely out. Harrison Salisbury's reports in the *New York Times* in the winter of '66 on the terrible effects of American bombing in Vietnam were old news to readers of the European press, who did not have to cope with the American government's challenge to freedom of information. It is to the great credit of the *NYR* that it gave Stone, Jean Lacouture, Bernard Fall, and others an early opportunity to give their version of the war to a wide and important audience in America. Moreover, the *NYR*

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showed a sure instinct for little-known books that revealed the sordid aspect of the American operation: for instance, *Air War: Viet Nam*, by Frank Harvey (reviewed by Robert Crichton, January 4, 1968), a book commissioned by the Air Force, which nevertheless documents the deadly use of napalm against Vietnamese civilians.

As the truth about Vietnam came out in the next three years, the attack on the system, that permits and fosters the war, became more radical and comprehensive. The *NYR* continues to publish Hannah Arendt, Hans Morgenthau, George Lichtheim, but it becomes increasingly responsive to the New Left, the "moral" stance in politics, the apocalyptic view. In recent years, the journal has featured the essays of Noam Chomsky on Vietnam and the culpability of the Liberal Establishment, Stokely Carmichael on Black Power, Jason Epstein on Community Control of the Schools, Andrew Kopkind on Radical Politics, Tom Hayden on the Newark riots. The disaffection from the conduct of the war, enforced by the feeling of domestic injustice, turns into an all-out assault on the Liberal Establishment, allegedly the responsible party.

The insurgence of the New Left in the pages of the *NYR* can be seen as an "act of conscience," an awakening of the liberal intellectual to a sense of his own moral and political culpabilities. Those who did not become conservative or militantly anti-Communist during the fifties became depoliticized, generalizing from their disenchantment with radical politics to politics generally. The turn from Stalinist radicalism was accompanied by the mixed emotions of bitterness toward the movement and self-congratulation about having preserved one's integrity or about having emerged from political immaturity. But the self-congratulation was not entirely warranted by the facts. There was the sorry spectacle of equivocation and fear in the face of McCarthyism, which could not be justified by anti-Communism. There were the temptations of position and prestige in or related to government, a possibility for the liberal intellectual since the days of the New Deal. And of course the liberal in and out of power in the recoil from the Stalinist movement could hardly be expected to be specially sensitive to the aggressions and self-interestedness of American foreign policy. The *practical* difference between the liberal and the avowed racist in their views of the Negro was seen as so small that the professed concern of liberal whites for the Negro's plight in America could be viewed as hypocrisy.

The New Left was hardly needed to score against out-and-out reactionaries. The liberals themselves had been doing that job. What was needed was an assault from the Left on the complacency of the American liberal conscience and the New Left, intimate with the failures of liberalism because in part at least it represented *the disaffection of liberalism from itself*, served the purpose. It is difficult to account for the curious "masochistic" hospitality of liberals in the past few years to the New Left in any other way.[1]

There has been a curious complicity between the "radical" and "the liberal," which suggests that one should not take the New

[1] One might also note in this connection a certain relaxation in political vigilance on the part of writers like Mary McCarthy who was a main figure in the period of disillusionment with Stalinist radicalism—as when she accepts uncritically the admission of the North Vietnamese that they were mistaken in killing 50,000 people in the collectivization program. "It is possible that [the purging of 50,000 people in the agrarian reform of 1955–56] could repeat itself in South Vietnam, if collectivization is attempted. Against this is the fact that the mistake was recognized and amends were made where still possible [The Rectification of Errors Campaign] and the point about an acknowledged mistake is not to repeat it" [January 18, 1968]. Her sharp sensitivity to the rhetoric of Stalinism should have made her suspect the term "error." How seriously are we to take a confession of error when it should have been a confession of crime? Opposition to the American role in Vietnam does not require our blinking such hard facts.

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Left attack on liberalism at its face value. Not only has the liberal become hospitable to the New Left attack, but the doctrinaire unwillingnesss of the new radicals to formulate, let alone implement, programs suggests an almost cheerful acceptance of their own powerlessness. The new radicals depend on those in power to make social changes, the need for which radicals can only dramatize. Liberal guilt and radical powerlessness have combined to make a strange political drama of the sixties. And given the diffuse unrevolutionary content of much "radical" action, liberals can afford the feeling of guilt.

The act of conscience is not the whole story, however; for it has occurred in a compromising atmosphere of fashionableness. The rightness of the New Left attack becomes less important than doing what is fashionably right. Some of the articles published in 1967 (e.g., those by Andrew Kopkind and Tom Hayden in August '67) are painful to read now. The absence of the critical faculty is so obvious that one can only surmise that the editors had relaxed their customary rigor because they wanted to be where the action was. Thus, Andrew Kopkind's mindless attack on Martin Luther King:

> He likes the idea of a guaranteed annual income, more Negro elected officials, better schools, more jobs, and protection of rights. These are unexceptionable goals, but King has no real notion of how they are to be attained, or to what they may lead. Although he speaks of structural changes, he assumes structural preservation.

If King's goals are unexceptionable, why the absurd innuendo in "to what they may lead." Measured by Kopkind's standards, it is difficult to see what separates King from the new militants. Since when have wisdom about political tactics and a clear vision of the emergent political order been characteristic qualities of the political guerrillas Kopkind celebrates, they who have in fact distinguished themselves by their principled refusal to provide programs? The non sequitur about structural changes and structural preservation cunningly concludes the paragraph without a single shred of evidence. Kopkind then goes on to show his political clairvoyance when he declares that the new militancy has shattered the old order. But worse than the intellectual failure of Kopkind's "argument" is the animus that the article reveals. Kopkind concludes: "At least we know now that even if all Martin Luther King's programs were enacted, and all Jerome Cavanaugh's reforms were adopted, and the Great Society as it is described materialized before our very eyes, there would still be guerrillas."

But according to any genuine radical critique, the failure of a society is precisely its inability to live up to its ideals. If American society achieved the humaneness and decency dreamed of by Martin Luther King, poverty, racism, adventurism abroad would disappear. Who then would these remaining guerrillas be? Fascists resentful about the new justice and hungry for power? The feeling of *resentment* is painfully strong in Kopkind's piece.

As it is in Tom Hayden's "report" on Newark in the same issue. "A conscious guerrilla," Hayden tells us with all the authority of new revolutionary theory, "can pull police away from the path of people engaged in attacking stores." Can we trust a revolutionary who offers us the extraordinary formulation that "a riot represents people making history"? So does war or genocide. I don't mean to suggest that genocide and the urban riots are morally commensurable, but simply that Hayden is uttering dangerous nonsense, which we are supposed to take seriously because he has prestige as a "revolutionary." There are other instances of this low-level political writing in the *NYR*. Only a card-carrying Yippie could be expected to respond to the histrionic hysteria of Jerry Rubin, that is unless people feel that to be "with it" they *have to respond* (see

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NYR, Feb. 13, 1969). There is so much moral and aesthetic ugliness in American life at present, especially in the cities, that it is hard to see how the politics of unthinking resentful confrontation will make the necessary radical changes—though one can imagine how it could make changes for the worse.

These articles are of the moment, not about it. They are symptoms, not diagnoses. Given the open commitment of the *NYR* to *critical* writing and thinking (i.e., the deflation of a temporarily inflated reputation), the presence of these articles invites suspicion about the political seriousness of its editors. Clearly the standards of exposition usually demanded of contributors were relaxed in the cases of Kopkind and Hayden.

MY COMPLAINT IS NOT that the *NYR* has changed. People, including editors, have the right to change their minds—indeed, have a moral obligation to change when events reveal a reality they have not perceived before. And the war in Vietnam is such an event. However, the content and tone of the disaffection do not follow automatically from the event. The hospitality to irrational forms of disaffection should be accounted for in the magazine. An atmosphere has been created in which the refusal to accept the escalation of political attitude and tone becomes embarrassing and awkward. Attitudes that several years ago had been considered reasonable by *NYR* writers now are peremptorily dismissed as indefensible. Dupee's statements about Baldwin have not been superseded by the new reality, but the effect of the political journalism in the NYR of the past two or three years has been a somewhat arbitrary recasting of the reviewer and the reviewed: it is as if Baldwin is now reviewing Dupee. One wonders what will happen when the New Left loses its cachet for the intellectuals: will the *NYR* turn to the next new thing?

The susceptibility of the *NYR* to political fashion reflects in part the depoliticizing of the intellectual in the fifties. There was good reason to respond to the sudden radicalization of the youth in the mid-sixties, but the quality of the response has too often been unresisting and uncritical, often lamely excused by an unwillingness to rock the boat. The fact is that style (the ideal of highbrowism) has little to offer as a guide to political life. Moreover there is a deep connection between style and fashion. To have the right style, to be in the fashion means that one must be in tune with the *Zeitgeist*. The *New York Review's* need to be "with it" weakens its professed (highbrow) dedication to the making of discriminations and judgments.

Fortunately, the New Left has not been exclusively represented in the *NYR* by the likes of Kopkind, Hayden, and Rubin. The journal has published serious and important articles by Noam Chomsky, Christopher Lasch, and Paul Goodman among others—that is, by men of first-rate intelligence and character who were radical before the fashion. In his essays "The Responsibility of the Intellectuals" (February 23, 1967) and "The Menace of Liberal Scholarship" (January 2, 1969) Chomsky makes a serious and articulate attack on liberalism. (The essays constitute a sort of *summa* of one trend that has developed in the pages of the *NYR* since 1965.)

The argument goes like this. Liberal intellectuals in America have paid an enormous price in intellectual and moral conscience by becoming part of the political and economic Establishment. Through government contracts and even participation in the formulation of policy and the operation of government, the liberal intellectual has forgotten that his first responsibility is to truth. He has put whatever intelligence and technique he has in the service of an interventionist foreign policy. He has been concerned to make the execution of policy more efficient rather than to consider the

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morality and wisdom of the policy. The result has been, in Conor Cruise O'Brien's phrase, "counterrevolutionary subordination." The motives for the intellectuals' complicity with the Establishment range, according to the critics, from bad faith—i.e., the pursuit of status, prestige, and security (of which intellectuals have always been in relatively short supply)—to disillusionment with Stalinist Marxism in the forties and fifties, a disillusionment that for some led "logically" to the championing of American interests. It has also been suggested that elitism is a bias of the intelligentsia, and that the opportunity given to intellectuals to make and execute policy merely encourages the normal self-righteousness and arrogance of intellectuals, who assume that they know better than the people of an underdeveloped country, for instance, what is good for them. The liberals often named in the charge are men like Daniel Bell, Arthur Schlesinger, J. K. Galbraith, Irving Kristol, Nathan Glazer, and Daniel Moynihan, some of whom were associated with the New York intellectual world out of which the *New York Review* emerged.

As a description of what has occurred, this argument made by Chomsky and others has much to recommend it. It is strong evidence against Mannheim's view, for instance, that intellectuals by virtue of their hard-earned knowledge and self-understanding have achieved a disinterestedness beyond ideology. But it strikes me as short on theoretical understanding and even seriously misleading in certain respects.

What the New Left critic believes he is attacking is not a version of liberalism or liberalism at a certain moment in history, but the very idea of liberalism itself: its supposed incapacity to understand, in Chomsky's words, "moral truths about political life." The vices of the liberal intellectual—his elitism, his technocratic relation to political problems, his affinity for the establishment—are all seen as springing from the essential character of liberalism itself.

In an excursion in his essay on liberal scholarship, Chomsky does a survey of liberal historiography on the Spanish Civil War, and he uncovers "a failure of objectivity" in representing "revolutionary movements that are largely spontaneous and only loosely organized, while rooted in deeply felt needs and ideals of dispossessed masses." Chomsky remarks that "it is a convention of scholarship that the use of such terms as those of the preceding phrase demonstrates naivete and muddle-headed sentimentality," a convention "supported by ideological conviction rather than history or investigation of social life." The essay is entitled "Objectivity and Liberal Scholarship," [2] and the failure of objectivity, it turns out, includes Communist intellectuals. If "Bolshevism and Western liberalism have been united in their opposition to popular revolution (in its anarchist manifestation)," it seems to me misleading to assign simply the blame to "contemporary liberal ideology," unless one wishes to extrapolate bolshevism from liberalism. The view of Eric Hobsbawm, for instance, that the anarchist movement in Spain during the Civil War was a "disaster" for the Loyalist cause, may be motivated by a false estimate of the pragmatics of conducting an efficient military campaign against Franco or by an elitist mistrust of the spontaneous action of the masses, but it is hard to see that this is a peculiar phenomenon of liberalism. One would sooner expect such a view from an *anti-liberal* bolshevism, with its open commitment to revolutionary elitism.

The willingness of intellectuals to join the Establishment proceeds (as critics have often remarked) from motives deeper than ideology, such as the desire for status, prestige,

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[2] An excerpted version of the essay appeared in the *NYR* in the January 2, 1969, issue with the title "The Menace of Liberal Scholarship." The passage on the Spanish Civil War is in the unabridged version printed in Chomsky's *American Power and the New Mandarins* (New York: Pantheon, 1969).

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security, and in some cases the more admirable desire (deluded as it may be) to "make a difference." But this kind of "sellout" is by no means unique to Western liberalism. The history of the intelligentsia in the Soviet Union is hardly a history of radical disaffection and responsibility to the truth. There have been notable exceptions of course, but that is precisely the point: responsibility to the truth is finally a matter of intellectual capacity and moral perspicacity and courage, whatever the going ideology might be. It is the work of a "moral elite" to use Chomsky's surprising phrase. It is true that a given ideology may provide the rationale and terms of the "sellout": in the Soviet Union, the scholasticizing of Marxism gave an inquisitorial cast to political actions and discussion. In holding an opinion, one could be risking one's life. The appeal to authority became the fatal style of intellectual life under Stalin.

In America the pragmatic bias of American life generally may have helped set the scene for the treason of the clerks. Anyone who has spoken to one of the "bright young men" of political science is struck by his problem-solving attitude to all issues. In the impulse to quantify and measure everything, to eschew all "soft-headed and sentimental" approaches to political questions is the American version of the banality of evil. A young, much published political scientist at a Northeastern University told me that my failure to see Vietcong terrorism as worse than the much wider devastation of Vietnam by the Americans was an indication to him that I did not have a proper conception of *humane* warfare. The computer-based decisions to devastate a certain area he regarded as more humane *and more efficient* than the "personal" style of Vietcong terrorism. Here an abstract relation to killing provides immunity from the pangs of conscience.

LIBERALISM BECOMES AN ABSTRACTION in the New Left attack, a convenient handle for attacking the adversary. (To say the liberal is the real enemy has, for intellectuals, the shock and fascination of paradox.) As it gets to be used ritualistically, the term "liberalism" introduces an opacity into political discussion and debate, which avoids complication. One has only to reverse the situation to see what is wrong. Imagine dealing with radical activity and scholarship by continuously identifying radicalism with bolshevik perversions of truth. It is not liberalism *per se* that has been discredited but certain programs and attitudes. For it is implicit though not admitted in the current argument that in its ideal commitment to maximizing the moral and rational elements in political life, in its belief in democratic procedure, liberalism is or should be a feature of *every* humane political philosophy.[3] Radicalism and liberalism are not necessarily antagonistic. It is the strong feeling that liberals have betrayed their own ideals that has made liberal philosophy itself seem indefensible. All this verges on platitude, but it is a mark of the extremity of the disaffection from liberalism that this no longer seems evidently true.

In the light of the scientistic piety about objectivity, the view of Noam Chomsky, Christopher Lasch, Eugene Genovese, and others that irresponsibility to truth may be the result of moral failure or insensitivity is valuable. For instance, it takes courage to see and express an unfashionable truth, and courage is a moral emotion. But in this view there is an illicit confusion between the idea of moral commitment (telling it like it is, regardless of the consequences) and left-wing ideological partisanship. Such a confusion easily becomes an excuse for an

[3] I am attributing these qualities to liberalism as an idea. The historical reality of liberalism is another matter, for like any other political type a liberal in practice may betray his ideals. The temptation to betray the ideals may be an unwitting feature of the ideology, but this must be demonstrated. If terms like "liberal" and "radical" have any meaning they unavoidably contain an element of abstraction, of definition: they stand for certain things. Indeed, the terms become opaquely "abstract" when their ideal content as well as their historical reality at a given moment is ignored.

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unself-critical indulgence in ideological passion. In "The Responsibility of the Intellectual" Chomsky cites with contempt Heidegger's pro-Hitler declaration in 1933 that "truth is the revelation of that which makes a people certain, clear and strong in its action and knowledge."

On the evidence of a good deal of recent militant Left ideologizing (e.g., the Cultural Revolution in China, black mythologizing), Heidegger's statement serves equally for Left and Right. When Lasch says that "scholarship has to give up its pretensions to scientific objectivity and root itself in moral commitment" (Nov. 11, 1965), he is using "moral commitment" in a vague and polemical way, for the test of the validity of this assertion is what one means by "moral commitment." In "The Education and the University We Need Now" (Oct. 29, 1969), Lasch and Genovese admit that "it would be disastrous if the attack on the irresponsibility of 'objective' scholarship . . . led only to the cynical conclusion that all scholarship is subjective and 'ideological'—the conclusion which some critics are only too eager to draw." But they fail to make clear why the conclusion cannot be derived from their own attack on "objective" scholarship—or why they obscure the issue by putting quotation marks around *objective* and *ideological.* Do they or don't they mean the words they use? On the face of it, the term *moral commitment* is less adequate as a guide to truth than the *objective* standards of a discipline.

If one means by moral commitment sensitivity to injustice, then one is beyond ideology. The moral insensitivity that Chomsky and others have dramatized is a feature of the complacency of privilege, whether the explicit political commitment is Left or Right. Sensitivity to injustice is generally a characteristic either of men who are the objects of injustice or of men who have the imagination, compassion, and courage to put themselves in the place of those who suffer injustice. The Left, when it comes to power, loses much of the sensitivity to injustice that gives it its moral strength out of power —which is why liberalism has kept insisting on democratic liberties in all societies. I recall a French leftist friend of mine saying in 1956 in the aftermath of the Russian invasion of Hungary, "Thank God for the Communist party—out of power." He meant that the French Communist party was valuable as the only real party of the working class and therefore as the Left in French political life. But he would never trust the party *in* power.

The danger of "counterrevolutionary subordination" may be greater than that of revolutionary subordination in a society in which the Left has no power, but this doesn't lessen the need for unremitting self-honesty in the Left. For the habits it develops out of power will condition what it becomes if and when it ever achieves power. It is not enough for a movement consciously to disavow authoritarianism. Anarchism (one inspiration of the New Left) is doctrinally anti-authoritarian, but the problems of sustaining genuine spontaneity in political life and that of controlling authoritarian types who tend to take control in "spontaneous" situations have never been solved. It is difficult to envisage permanent success for a movement that tries to sustain itself simply by preserving its moral purity, its idealism and courage, that does not formulate an adequate theoretical account of political reality. "Moral purity" without honest realism tends to corrupt itself into self-righteousness and to be tempted to mindless violence.

Even at its best the new radical critique rarely gets beyond moral repudiation. Thus Chomsky can't seem to decide whether American foreign policy is inane or selfish and rapacious. Behind the uncertainty of view is the absence of a theory to account for American political behavior, indeed for political behavior generally—and, one might add, to envisage political possibilities. Lasch and Genovese in their recent essay on

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education severely criticize the New Left attack on the universities with the hindsight of its failure but without any foreknowledge or understanding of how it can be remedied. Thus on the theme of the New Left demand for relevance, they wisely perceive its self-defeating character:

> The demand for "relevance" is . . . self-defeating. It does reflect an awareness that humane learning has been transformed into a harmless and degraded object of consumption and almost totally banished from industrial production and statecraft. It is nevertheless misguided. By its very nature it reinforces the vulgar bourgeois ideology and practice. Indeed the demand for "relevance" amounts to a capitulation to the enemy's world view. Radicals ought to be resisting the pressure to denigrate learning and to ignore the ethical implications of every discipline. Instead the New Left has merely inverted the terms and sought to have the universities serve the poor rather than the rich. As a general formulation, the demand that the university serve the people is meaningless; it can acquire meaning only in the terms the New Left has too often ignored or rejected—those that stress the defense of humane learning and its extension into every field of technical and scientific work.

But this wisdom is accompanied by empty platitudes about reconciling science and humanities.

> Science and engineering must become once again a branch of philosophy, a means not simply of solving predefined problems but of raising questions about the ends of human life. The arts and humanities must be rescued from their present degraded, essentially ornamental position and established on an equal footing with science, as studies that make their own contribution to the understanding of the objective world.

And again:

> The ultimate goal should be to humanize the conditions of industrial apprenticeship by restoring the unity of all learning. Scientific and technical subjects must come to be informed by ethical and philosophical concerns. . . .

Admirable sentiments, to be sure, but unless they are attached to genuine observations about what goes on and what could go on in the disciplines, the sentiments turn to mere rhetoric. To say that science must be humanized is not much of an advance on the demand for relevance.

THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE *NYR* has been real, though seriously flawed. It has with some success performed the needed task of *haute vulgarization* for more than 90,000 readers. Articles on philosophy, art, economics are not simply responses to recent developments, but attempts to give in microcosmic form a picture of what is alive and relevant in a whole field. The level of exposition is above anything we might call the popular level (since the audience is sophisticated), but the impulse is to break out of professionalism, to speak about subjects in the common language of discourse. Happily, the literary and art criticism has not been overwhelmed by the latest "audacities" of the avant-garde. Reviewers like Rahv, Gombrich, and Haskell have responded with intelligence and authority to the current scene. The *NYR* is one of the few places where art criticism is at once unfashionable and unsquare.

The political criticism has been much more erratic, more responsive to the fashion. The *NYR* is too fashionable, too much "with it" to be characterized as I am sure it would like to see itself: the conscience of the intellectual community in political, intellectual, and aesthetic matters. As provocation, however, it has played an important role in our cultural life.

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Benjamin I. Schwartz

The Religion of Politics

Reflections on the Thought of Hannah Arendt

IN A PERIOD RICH with controversy one should perhaps allow fading quarrels to die. It is not my primary intention to rekindle the heated debate that swirled about Miss Arendt's *Eichmann in Jerusalem,* but rather to see that book within the larger context of her philosophy. The following reflections were actually prompted by a reading of Miss Arendt's *On Revolution* which, at least for this reader, suddenly revealed a certain unity of structure that can be discerned in all her writings. A subsequent reading of the *Human Condition,* the essays entitled *Between Past and Future,* the book on Rahel Varnhagen, and a rereading of the *Origins of Totalitarianism* and other essays have suggested that the polemical attacks on *Eichmann in Jerusalem,* whatever their intrinsic merits, failed to do justice to Miss Arendt as philosopher. It became clear to me that the Eichmann book can be understood only in terms of a certain preestablished conceptual framework.

What is more, many of Miss Arendt's themes (quite apart from the famous theory of totalitarianism) are—if one may use the cliché—highly relevant to a range of current concerns. They relate to certain tendencies in the New Left, to the role of Jews in the New Left, and to certain characteristic forms of Jewish self-flagellation. Her ideas about the general condition of man in the modern world seem peculiarly related to her ideas about Jews, and one is also inclined to feel that the reverse is equally true.

Miss Arendt is not among those complacent philosophers who believe that all the agonies of our time are merely small eddies in the "process of modernization." We live, she believes, in an age of deep spiritual, cultural, and political crisis, and on this broader issue my own prejudices tend to coincide with hers. An agreement that our predicaments are serious does not, however, lead us very far toward a common diagnosis, and I shall confess at the outset that I find hers basically unconvincing.

The analysis she offers of our situation is clear and definite. She presents us with a series of sharp dichotomies and categorical classifications designed to encompass the entire experience of man within their tyrannical embrace. There is the dichotomy of the "political realm" and (bourgeois) "Society," of the public and the private, of the exaltation of life and the exaltation of public happiness, of power and violence, etc. In her *Human Condition* she spells out in enormous detail what she regards as the basic alternate modes of human existence. There is first the ancient distinction between the contemplative and the active life. Being a philosopher herself, Miss Arendt by no means denigrates the contemplative life, but she does not seem to regard it as the highest mode of human existence. That, she believes, is represented by the life of political action. The contemplative life, she implies, is positive only when found in a society with a vigorous and genuine political life.

More important in her scheme of things than the distinction between the contemplative and active life is the enormous range of distinctions she discerns within the life of action itself—a category embracing within its limits both man's highest potentialities and his most ignoble modes of existence. At the lower limit we find the

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life of labor and production—the life of *"homo faber."* Labor and production (even artistic production) cuts off man from genuine relations with other men. It chains him to the necessities of biological existence and subordinates him to the laws of nature. Because of its obsessive concentration on the satisfaction of biological needs, it fosters an orientation to material self-interest and comes to be the ultimate source of bourgeois privatism and greed. Miss Arendt points out with approval that, however much the ancient Greeks may have gloried in the creations of art, they had a certain contempt for the artist, since even this highest form of production was marked by a kind of philistine (banausic) isolation from public life and a subordination to the constraints of matter.

In the ancient world the household was the basic unit of economic life. Organized to assure biological survival in terms of both production and reproduction, the aims of the household were narrowly utilitarian and privatistic. It was this division of labor within the household that produced the patriarchic hierarchy of master and servant and thus provided the general model for despotic hierarchic relations—while the concern with household management (*oikonomia*) later provided the prototype for impersonal bureaucratic administration. What we call "Society" in the modern world (society considered apart from the political realm) is a kind of monstrous extension of the old household principle to the whole societal entity. Living in a society largely organized around economic processes means that our lives are governed on a grand scale by those motivations and attitudes which in ancient Greece and Rome were confined to the privacy of the household.

In striking contrast to the narrow and mean existence that characterizes "homo faber," we have what Miss Arendt defines as the life of action (*handeln*) properly speaking. Action is a transaction between man and man rather than a kind of making or fabrication. It involves deeds and speech exchanged among men, and its true significance lies in itself. The higher significance of life lies in the dramas or "stories" in which men confront each other as fellow actors in a common human world, rather than as workers and producers organized for utilitarian goals. Only in this life of interaction can man be said to be free, for here he can initiate creative deeds and creative speech, while in his attempts to fashion nature to his own ends man necessarily becomes enslaved to those impersonal processes governing the world of nature.

Miss Arendt's absorbing discussion of the difference between the life of action and the life of fabrication reminds one to a degree of Martin Buber's distinction between the I-thou and the I-it relationship. In sharp contrast to Buber, however, she vehemently insists that the only really significant life of action is the political life. She concedes the existence of a kind of life of action which is not political. She ascribes to Christianity in particular a concern with the ethics of intrapersonal relations—a kind of goodness that remains obscure and hidden from public knowledge. But this is just her point. What makes life in the "public space" significant and full of glory and honor is precisely its public nature.

In ancient Athens and Rome the citizens confronted each other as equals within the public space, where all their deeds and words were displayed in all their effulgent radiance. The motivation of the actors within the public space was a kind of courageous rivalry for distinction. Vying with each other for the admiration of their contemporaries, they hoped their acts would achieve a kind of "worldly immortality" by being recorded in history and poetry. The significance of the political life lay precisely in the "grandeur" and "public happiness" men derived from participation in public affairs. One of the main tragedies of the life of most men is that their lives are passed in private, obscure insignificance.

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Nor is the central significance of political action to be sought in any metapolitical goals to which it is instrumental; it lies within the political drama itself. Occasionally Miss Arendt even shows a certain scorn toward the "welfare state" concept, with its implication that the main purpose of political life is to secure the economic welfare and security of society. This is, at it were, to make the highest serve the lowest.

It should be clear by now that Miss Arendt seeks—and finds—the model of ideal political action in classical antiquity. The citizens of the polis relegated the tasks of assuring life's necessities to the obscurity of the household where much of the prosaic day-to-day work was unfortunately carried on by slaves. Having thus freed themselves from the "idiocy" of private life, the citizens confronted each other as peers within the public realm where they vied with others in noble deed and word; where their longing for "sacra fama" led them to lead lives of "public virtue" and to seek public rather than private happiness.

Having defined the word "political" in accord with this idealized vision of the ancient polis, Miss Arendt systematically proceeds to sever it from all the unpleasant associations it has acquired in ordinary usage. Since Athenian and Roman citizens confronted each other as equals within the political space, politics, properly speaking, has nothing to do with ruling or being ruled. On the contrary, where tyranny arose in Greece and Rome, this may be considered an introjection of the household hierarchy of master and servants into the political realm. Since citizens interacted as free equals, there could be no question of rulership within the political realm. The citizens of Rome and Athens were involved in ruling their large populations of noncitizens and even in ruling empires, but the word "political" ought to be applied only to transactions among free and equal citizens.

Similarly, since political action involves power, the word "power" becomes in Miss Arendt's usage wholly eulogistic. Power is a kind of energy engendered among political men active in the public space. Being free and equal, these political men have a clear sense of the limits of power and presumably do not try to dominate each other. Where political power becomes corrupt, it is wholly due to the sinister influence "Society" exerts upon the political realm. And as Miss Arendt continues to insist with tireless vehemence, political power has nothing to do with violence. Ultimately, there can be no true freedom apart from the political life. The liberalistic concept of freedom stresses freedom from politics, a freedom to immure oneself in private existence; but for Miss Arendt the only true freedom is "public freedom"—freedom to participate in the ennobling life of political action.

From all this we can see where Miss Arendt finds the ultimate source of the crisis of modern man. It is to be sought in the absence of that supreme good—the noble life of political action, public happiness and public freedom. Neither science, philosophy, culture, nor any other good can in any way compensate for this "lost treasure." [1] Indeed, in the absence of this treasure they may even play a deleterious role.

One is tempted to ask—where outside of the ancient polis was this ideal of the good ever realized? For the absence of this highest good is by no means confined to the present age. There are vast cultures which have never even suspected the existence of what Miss Arendt proposes as the highest form of human existence. One's mind boggles at the thought of the millions of Chinese whose lives both past and present have, in Miss Arendt's view, been utterly devoid of true significance. Even in Greece itself, Socrates and Plato initiated that fateful turn from the life of the polis, that turn to an antipolitical philosophy which together with Judeo-Christian influence was to dominate the mind of the West for centuries. In recent centuries

[1] *On Revolution*, Viking Press, p. 284.

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classical civic virtue and public happiness do, indeed, reappear in Colonial America and reach their culmination in the Founding Fathers of the American Revolution, only to be lost in good measure by later generations of Americans who turned from the political realm to the narrow pursuit of private happiness.

In all the great revolutions of modern times—I paraphrase Miss Arendt—there have arisen from the people themselves spontaneous impulses to create local "elementary republics" (the French revolutionary societies, the Paris Commune, the Russian Soviets, the Hungarian workers council) which, if they had survived, would have distributed the right to political participation and public happiness throughout society. In fact, however, these spontaneous popular impulses to revive the antique political virtues were invariably betrayed by revolutionary elites, bureaucracies, and all the corruptions of "Society." This belief in the latent aspiration of the people to create "elementary republics" represents, as it were, the utopian populist side of Miss Arendt's political philosophy. Why these latent aspirations to participate in public affairs should have existed at all is by no means made clear. In any event, the unwholesome attitudes that have frustrated these noble aspirations have in the last century achieved a clear ascendancy.

Another modern area within which Miss Arendt finds a partial embodiment of the virtues of the polis is in the structure of the nation-state, particularly as it existed in the first half of the nineteenth century. Within the nation-state there did arise a political realm—a "public space"—within which men "with a taste for public freedom" could continue to cultivate the political virtues. Even though the large modern nations were divided into social classes, the state provided these classes with "equality before the law" and incorporated them into its articulated political structure. Furthermore, like the ancient polis, the nation-state rested on a kind of "homogeneity of population" which made possible a structured political community.

It is interesting in this connection to read Miss Arendt's lengthy discussion in her *Origins of Totalitarianism*[2] of the hopeless plight of the stateless refugees during the period between the world wars. She does not end her distressing account with a denunciation of the heartless exclusivism of the nation-state. On the contrary, she finds its behavior quite understandable.

> The reason why the ancient city-state or modern nation-state so often insist on ethnic homogeneity is that they hope to eliminate as far as possible those natural and always present differences and differentiations which by themselves arouse dumb hatred, mistrust and discrimination because they indicate all too clearly those spheres where men cannot act and change at will.[3]

Only those who are fundamentally alike, it would seem, can act together as equals within the political realm. Much as they are to be pitied, the stateless have "lost all distinctive political qualities" and have "become human beings and nothing else" (in Miss Arendt's scheme a human being is infinitely less than a citizen). In the end the danger lies not in the totalistic presumptions of the nation-state but in the proliferation of stateless "barbarians" who threaten the state's very existence as a political community.

We are also amazed to learn from Miss Arendt that the nation-state as such is in no way responsible for imperialism. On the contrary, the rise of imperialism coincides with the decline and fall of the nation-state. One is impelled to ask—what decline of which nation-states? Where have the states involved in imperialism fallen? Here again we find ourselves in the realm of Miss Arendt's normative definitions. Like the "political realm," the "nation-state" is a good thing by definition, for it is ruled by political representatives who have clear and

[2] *The Origins of Totalitarianism,* Harcourt, Brace & World, pp. 269–302.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 301.

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gentlemanly concepts of the limits of national expansion. The statesman of the nation-state during the period before "bourgeois Society" captured the state thought "primarily in terms of established national territory." Before the end of the nineteenth century, when Europe was still ruled by political elites, a "comity of nations" prevailed. The balance-of-power principle was universally and decorously respected, since expansion as a supreme aim of politics "is not really political at all." [4]

Like Lenin but for her own reasons, Miss Arendt insists on using the word imperialism exclusively to describe a situation that emerged at the end of the nineteenth century. The kind of overseas expansion occurring from the sixteenth century on took place at a time when Europe was ruled not by "bourgeois Society" but by political elites. Hence it must be different in kind. And naturally, any discussion of Athenian or Roman imperialism is automatically ruled out. The Roman empire was entirely different because it integrated "the most heterogeneous peoples by imposing upon them a common law." [5] As in Hobson, imperialism is wholly the creation of a corrupt bourgeois society—of a finance capitalism with infinite transnational expansionist aims. However, says Miss Arendt, this bourgeois imperialism was resisted by the nation-state and its political representatives to the very end, since "no nation-state could with a clear conscience ever try to conquer foreign peoples." [6] Therefore, when Miss Arendt speaks of the collapse of the nation-state, what she means is the presumed capture of the nation-state by the imperialistic bourgeoisie who were able to delude even such sterling Jacobin political representatives as Clemenceau into the belief that colonial troops were necessary for France's survival.

This is not the place to consider Miss Arendt's account of imperialism as a contest between the healthy forces of the nation-state and the sinister forces of bourgeois Society. It should simply be noted that we are still dealing here with the contrast between the political realm as the center of all man's highest impulses and the realm of "Society," of economic production as the source of unbridled greed and lust for domination. The final upshot is that imperialism, bureaucracy, and mass society—all aspects of "Society"—have once again led to the disappearance of the life of public happiness and freedom.

MISS ARENDT'S RELIGION OF POLITICS is clearly based on a vision of classical antiquity that itself derives from a venerable tradition. One thinks of Machiavelli, Montesquieu, and Rousseau. But the peculiarly exalted image of politics we find in her writings seems to derive more immediately from a version of the cult of antiquity that emerged in Germany at the end of the eighteenth century. A portion of the German intelligentsia of this period found itself enormously frustrated by the lack of political life in the princely states of Germany and highly envious of the role intellectuals were playing in the political life of England and France, particularly after the French Revolution. And precisely within this group, alienated from all actual political experience, do we find the most exalted dream of the life of the ancient polis.

The fragmentary writings of the young Hegel [7] furnish us with striking examples of rhapsodic invocations of ancient Greek political life. They provide in spirit the political equivalent of what Winckelmann represents in the aesthetic sphere, and they remind us as well of the pseudoclassical canvasses of David. Here we find a beautiful and free people; men who while savoring all the joys of freedom and equality are by

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 125.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 125.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 126.

[7] Mainly to be found in *Hegels Theologische Jugendschriften*, Herman Nohl, ed., Mohr-Siebeck (Tuebingen, 1907).

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no means concerned with their own private interests but instead are consumed with a passion for the destiny of the polis–honor, glory, and sublimity. The young Hegel, uninhibited by twentieth-century pacifist scruples, is by no means inclined to suppress the martial aspects of these antique virtues. One of the most sublime activities of the ancient citizen was his willingness to die for the fatherland on the field of battle. Even later in his *Philosophy of Right* Hegel was to state that war among nations was one of the strongest forces in creating public virtue by its ability to overcome the privatism and self-interest of "civil society."

It is, of course, in Hegel that we first find the distinction between the state and civil (*bürgerlich*) society which, in somewhat modified form, plays so large a role in Miss Arendt's political philosophy. With the decline of the ancient polis men retreated into the narrow world of their own petty concerns. Nor did it matter much to Hegel whether this privatism manifested itself as a concern for one's own physical "life security" or for individual salvation in the afterlife. There is a close affinity between Christian privatism and bourgeois privatism, and it was out of this privatistic egotism that there emerged modern "civil society"—a human association held together only by the necessities of individual and group self-interest. The modern nation-state, on the other hand, should represent the ancient ideal of the public, the universal and the whole. The French Revolution—so the young Hegel had thought at the beginning of the revolution—would witness a resurrection of the beautiful life of the antique political community. Soon, however, it became apparent that it would lead to the triumph not of the citizen but of the bourgeois. Perhaps then it would be Germany, after all, which would witness the true revival of the public virtues of antiquity!

It is especially interesting to note the role Judaism plays in all these ruminations.[8] Judaism, it would appear, was one of the main sources of the narrow concern with individual security that has dominated the Western world. Abraham was concerned only with preserving the life of himself and his descendants. The Jewish God, in this view, was a "God of necessity" to whom the Jews abjectly submitted because he assured them mere life as an end in itself. Thus, Abraham cared not at all for the fatherland, or for political life—only for a transcendental God who would assure his own security and posterity. The German philistine of Hegel's own time who cared for nothing more than his personal income and salvation thus came to be seen as the modern embodiment of this Jewish spirit. He sought from the princely state only what the Jews sought from their God.

Turning for a moment from Hegel to the Marx of *On the Jewish Question,* we are astonished to see how much of it is simply a more vehement reiteration of what is already to be found in the young Hegel—more vehement, perhaps, precisely because of Marx's Jewish self-involvement. In the

[8] Hegel, *Fragmente,* Herman Nohl, ed., 233–239 (pp. 110–117).

Combinations

THE VIENNA FORUM—*where ponderous Marxists and ponderous theologians meet—recently published an article based on the visit of its editor to a "commune." Of special interest to him and his readers was the number of possible sex combinations which he correctly figures to be* $S=\frac{1}{2}n\ (n-1)$, *including, perhaps inadvertently, the homosexual and lesbian acts. One reader, however, condemned this formula as "the product of a thoroughly bourgeois-late capitalist mentality, as it leaves out the wealth of possible group variations with more than two participants, and also the acoustical (?!) acts." He continues: "If N is the number of members and n the number of lovers at any given time, then the correct formula is:*

$$\sum_{n-1}^{N} 2^{n-1}\left(1+\frac{(n-1)(n-2)}{n}\right)$$

In the case of 5 communards that already gives 197 combinations."

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young Marx there are again the rhapsodic odes to ancient Greece—to that principle of freedom "which disappears from the world with the Greeks and into the blue haze of heaven with Christianity." [9] Like Hegel before him, Marx finds that the French Revolution, instead of reviving the political glories of ancient Greece and Rome, had simply given free rein to bourgeois society. Like Hegel before him and Miss Arendt after him, the young Marx is "puzzled" that men who have just begun to savor the joys of public life should turn their attention from public happiness to the pursuit of private interests; that "political life should become a mere means whose end is the life of civil [bourgeois] society." [10] Finally, we find here that the Jews—or Judaism—are the spirit incarnate of bourgeois society—of bourgeois egotism, and that Judaism is the religion of "practical need." What is this, however, if not a restatement of Hegel's vision of Judaism as the religion of mere clinging to material existence?

Apologists for the essay on the "Jewish question" insist that Judaism is treated by Marx merely as a symbol of bourgeois society.[11] However, in the shoddy Hegelianizing that characterizes this pamphlet, symbol and reality cannot be separated. The young Marx genuinely believes that Jewish money power is in firm control. In this pamphlet Marx, to be sure, sharply departs from Hegel's faith that the "political realm" as it existed in the Germany of his time embodied man's universal ideal nature. A state that can exist side by side with civil society, a state that can comfortably accommodate the "spirit of Judaism," can hardly represent man's higher potentialities. It must in fact become the slave of that society. One might say that Marx's downgrading of the political realm was the revenge of a disappointed lover who had once shared Hegel's vision of the role of the antique state. Miss Arendt, however, retains a pristine faith in the "political realm" and must indignantly reject Marx's utopia where active political life would no longer play any role.

WHAT UNITES Hegel, the young Marx, and Miss Arendt is a belief in the ideality of political life in classical antiquity. Miss Arendt is also "puzzled" that the revival of "public happiness" after the American Revolution should have fallen so far short of Greco-Roman ideality. Why did such men as Thomas Jefferson and the other Founding Fathers who appreciated so well the joys of "public happiness" and found such fulfillment in public life still speak of politics as a means to some sort of metapolitical "pursuit of happiness. . . ." The happiness of private life?

What further unites Miss Arendt to her predecessors is a tendency to see the glories of Greco-Roman antiquity juxtaposed to the sad limitations of Hebraism.

There is no need, however, to become locked into Miss Arendt's Germanic version of the Hellenism/Hebraism controversy. One may be entirely responsive to the glory that was Greece, to its art, literature, and philosophy; one may fully appreciate the Greco-Roman legacy of the ideal of active citizenship without succumbing to her "antique" religion of politics. Lack of access to or interest in the "political realm" may be seen as an evil even by those who do not regard the "political realm" as the headquarters of all man's highest virtues. We must be concerned with the political sphere because only there can many of our problems be confronted, and not because the "public space" is more immune to selfishness, corruption, and sordid struggles for

[9] Letter of Marx to Ruge, May 1843.

[10] "Zur Judenfrage," in Karl Marx, *Die Frühschriften*, Kroner Verlag (Stuttgart), pp. 194–195.

[11] It is noteworthy that, for the young Marx, while Christianity is an illusion, it is an illusion that projects man's ideality, while Judaism is simply the incarnation of materialistic egotism. Similarly, in Miss Arendt, medieval Christianity does carry on the values of the contemplative life.

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power (power—not distinction!) than any other realm of human experience. One sure way of forever alienating the young from political life would be to foster in them the kind of fantastic expectations of political life encouraged by Miss Arendt.

As a layman in classical studies, I have the impression that Miss Arendt's version of classical antiquity bears the same relation to the realities of Greek and Roman politics as Winkelmann's writings bear to the true glories of classical art. She never raises the question why men like Socrates and Plato were so profoundly discontented with the political life of Athens. One may say—as some have—that they represented "reactionary interests," but Miss Arendt respects them too highly to accept so glib an explanation. Is it possible that, living as closely as they did to the "public space" of the Athenian assembly, they were aware that the public realm offers no escape from self-interest, lowly intrigues, and what seem to have been the manipulations of some of those whom they called sophists? They could see that Athenians did not only "vie for distinction"; Athenians also competed for power. And if this was probably true of Periclean Athens, what are we to say of those sordid corruptions and dark intrigues of Cicero's Rome which seem completely absent from Miss Arendt's consciousness?

Miss Arendt manages to maintain her lofty view of "public affairs" by never discussing the actual content of these affairs. To her the issues involved in public affairs simply provide the occasion for great deeds and words. To speak of the contents of public affairs is, of course, to become immediately aware of the nonpolitical matters with which these affairs are concerned. One may share the feeling that in political life men can rise above concern with particular interests and become the voice of more universal interests; one may reject a dogmatic "group interest" theory of politics; yet the fact remains that a consideration of "public affairs" can never be divorced from the clash of interests both inside and outside the "political realm."

Furthermore, contrary to Miss Arendt's neat dichotomy between Society as the realm of necessity and politics as the realm of freedom, men deeply involved in public affairs are fully conscious that just as freedom is by no means unknown in the nonpolitical transactions of human beings, so the tragic weight of necessity can place overwhelming constraints on their action. John Adams and James Madison, whom Miss Arendt constantly displays in their Roman togas bathed in an atmosphere of "public happiness," were often in deep distress over the issues they faced. Both were acutely aware of the complex role of interest in public affairs. Adams, in particular, with his sober Calvinist heritage, by no means believed that mere participation in political life lifted men onto the high plateau of "public virtue."

In offering these qualifications and disclaimers, one need not deny the existence of what Miss Arendt calls "public happiness." The life of politics is often highly satisfying to those who participate in it, although there is no warrant for assuming that those who most enjoy public happiness are necessarily most notable for public virtue. In all spheres of life there is a complex relationship between ends and means. One may—contrary to Miss Arendt—feel that the political sphere *is* functional to other human ends without denying that it can become a source of deep meaning to those who participate in it. The same is true, however, of military life, and even of the life of work and business.

If we must reject the fantasy that the "public space" provides a refuge from the frailties of man, what can one say of Miss Arendt's notion that politics—properly defined—has nothing to do with rulership? To what extent was the agenda of the Athenian assembly taken up with the rulership of Athens' noncitizens and slaves? To what extent was it taken up with the rule of the

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Athenian empire? To judge from her idealized treatment of the Roman Empire, one suspects that she regards the Athenian empire (which she never discusses) as a federation of equals. But even a superficial reading of Thucydides would indicate the extent to which many of Athens' colonies regarded themselves as harshly ruled from above. The history of internecine group conflicts in Republican Rome, so clearly marked by the ascendancy of one group over another, nowhere receives her attention. The fact that, at various times and places, members of ruling groups have treated each other as peers by no means diminishes their common concern with rulership. When Miss Arendt goes so far as to imply that political elites are more interested in preserving their own freedom than in ruling others,[12] one must observe that all human experience cries out against her.

Similarly, her fine and cogent analysis of the distinction between power and violence cannot remove the fact that the two have always been closely associated. Political power, in Athens, Rome, and elsewhere, may not have been based on violence but in achieving its ends it had constant recourse to violence. Miss Arendt's precursors in the cult of the political glory of classical antiquity—Machiavelli, Montesquieu, Rousseau, Hegel, and others—were by no means diffident in acknowledging the degree to which civic and martial virtues had gone hand-in-hand in ancient Greece and Rome. Indeed there are even pages in Miss Arendt's own writings which suggest that the defensive violence of physical resistance is one of the clearest signs of the presence or absence of civic virtue.

One could go on at length in this consideration of Miss Arendt's religion of politics, with its manichaean insistence on the "political realm" as the region of the good and "Society" as the region of evil; but instead we shall turn to a consideration of the relationship between this religion and Miss Arendt's views on Jews and Judaism. It has already been suggested that in the German variant of the cult of classical antiquity to which Miss Arendt adheres, there existed a kind of dialectic polarity between Hellenism and Hebraism. It would thus be interesting to consider to what extent her view of Hebraism fits the tradition.

HANNAH ARENDT DOES NOT ASSIGN to Hebraism the initial responsibility for the decline of political life in the ancient world. Socrates, Plato, and the whole post-Socratic philosophic tradition had initiated the fatal turn from the life of political action to an exaltation of the contemplative life, and later they were followed by Christianity. Christianity was also the heir, however, of the tradition of the Old Testament, which particularly insisted on an exaltation of "life as highest of all human goods." And this, as we shall learn, was a most unfortunate contribution.

The heart of Miss Arendt's views about the Jews can be found in the following passage:

> One should bear in mind that lack of political ability and judgment have been caused by the very nature of Jewish history —the history of a people without a government, without a country and without a language. Jewish history offers the extraordinary spectacle of a people, unique in this respect, which began its history with a well-defined concept of history and an almost conscious resolution to achieve a well-circumscribed plan on earth and then, without giving up this concept, avoided all political action for two thousand years. The result was that the political history of the Jewish people became even more dependent upon unforeseen accidental factors than the history of other nations so that the Jews stumbled from one role to another and accepted responsibility for none." [13]

[12] *On Revolution*, p. 280.

[13] *Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 8.

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Having learned how highly Miss Arendt values "political action," we can measure the full weight of this indictment. She is not merely charging the Jewish people with a lack of prudence; she is charging them with a wilful indifference to life's highest good.

When was this primal sin first committed? One must assume that it began when the Jews in Babylon presumed to survive as a group even though their state had been destroyed. Their sin lay in their assumption that they still possessed what they considered to be the ingredients of a good communal life even after having lost their political soul. What then can we say of the Hebraic conception of the good life which led to this fatal decision?

Mis Arendt does not devote much analytical attention to the inner life of the Jews. She is mainly concerned with their unfortunate role in the world surrounding them, but what she does have to say is trenchant and unequivocal. Ancient Judaism, we learn, made "life the highest of goods" and it was precisely on this point that the paths of Hebrew and pagan antiquity diverged so decisively.[14] "Life" means brute biological survival; it refers to food, shelter, physical comfort, reproduction, etc. "Nothing," we learn, "lay further from the Old Testament than classical antiquity's contempt for the trouble and toil of sheer living, for work and the bearing of children." [15] Because of their convulsive clinging to life, the ancient Jews would have been incapable of understanding the reasoning which lay behind the Greek exposure of defective infants or the notion that a life without health is not worth living.

The emphasis on mere living naturally ranged the Jews on the side of *"homo faber."* In Christianity, which took over this attitude from the Jews, "work itself—that is, the activities which are necessary to keep the life process moving, were at least partially freed of that contempt which antiquity cherished for it." [16] One might indeed say that the Jewish God was a *deus faber* who bore little resemblance to the radiant divinities vying with each other for honor and glory on Mount Olympus. In the dichotomy polis/household, the Jews opted entirely for the dismal household, and to the extent that the household is the ultimate source of modern bourgeois society the Jews may be considered the primal ancestors of the bourgeoisie. From Miss Arendt's silence, it might also appear that, unlike Christianity, Judaism contributed nothing to the contemplative side of life.

The possibility mentioned by some—that ancient Jewish ideas may have contributed something to modern political thought—is not, of course, entertained by Miss Arendt. In dealing with the institutions of local government in Puritan New England before the American Revolution—institutions which, of course, she ardently admires—Miss Arendt feels obliged to observe that "if there was any theoretical influence that contributed to the compacts and agreements in early American history it was of course the Puritans' reliance on the Old Testament and especially their rediscovery of the concept of the Covenant of Israel." [17] Rather than admit this unpalatable possibility, however, Miss Arendt chooses to believe that the Mayflower Compact was due to no "theoretical influence" whatsoever but was basically a response to the logic of events. She then assures us that "these strictly religious influences and movements including the Great Awakening, had no influence whatsoever on what the men of the Revolution did or thought." [18]

By their sanctification of mere life and celebration of work as a value, both Judaism and Christianity helped create the preconditions for the triumph of *homo faber* and *homo laborans*—hence the triumph of

[14] *Vita Activa,* Kohlhammer Verlag (Stuttgart), p. 307.
[15] *Ibid.,* p. 308.
[16] *Ibid.,* p. 390.
[17] *On Revolution,* p. 171.
[18] *Ibid.,* p. 310.

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modern bourgeois society. Because of their primal sin, however, the Jews were destined to play a still more unfortunate role in modern society. During the eighteenth and early part of the nineteenth centuries, the Jewish men of wealth—according to Miss Arendt the unchallenged leaders of the Jewish people—became the financial creditors of the nation-state. This did not signify, we learn, any intention on their part to participate in public affairs or any particular loyalty to the nation-state. Nothing in their experience had prepared them for either. They were still the Court Jews who conceived of their role simply as suppliant intermediaries between their own people and the power that be. Although they might have used their financial influence within the nation-state and later in the international world of finance to wield real power—to become similar to how they were depicted in anti-Semitic fantasies—they were not really interested in political power (no compliment, from Miss Arendt). At most, they cared about the despotic power they exercised as absolute rulers of the Jewish people "The exclusive position of the house of Rothschild in the Jewish world," we read, "replaced to a certain extent the old bonds of religious and spiritual tradition." [19]

This notion that the Jews as a people were controlled hand-and-foot by these lay leaders is simply assumed by Miss Arendt, as if it required no proof. It would not fit her framework to assume otherwise. Despotic as these leaders of the Jewish people were, they nevertheless found it to their interest to perpetuate the existence of the Jews as a separate group within society, even when they themselves began to tread the path of assimilation. That they should have chosen to remain the leaders of the Jews when they had such glamorous opportunities for achieving power in the large world of European affairs can only be explained by the fact that they may, after all, have shared the dumb instinct for self-preservation which was a characteristic of the people as a whole.

THE GRIM RESULT of all this is that the Jews did not come to play any role in the healthy "political realm" of the nation-state. They remained within the unwholesome realm of Society but even here they were not assimilated by any of the social classes, those classes that were the only comparatively healthy element in society, since through the political parties they were incorporated into the political structure of the state. But the Jews, as a separate rootless group, remained entirely outside the nation-state. They were condemned to be either pariahs or parvenus and thus remained a peculiarly unhealthy element in the amorphous growth of that bourgeois society which was eating away at the structures of the nation-state.

It is interesting to note that Miss Arendt also attacks assimilated—or rather assimiating—Jews. The real heart of animus is that, given her analysis of the role of the Jews in the nation-state, no genuine radical assimilation was possible. Jewish businessmen and intellectuals (most of them quite as apolitical as the businessmen) were bent on being accepted in Society. In fact, though not absorbed into it, the Jews "became the symbols of Society." [20] Assimilating Jews remained Jews whether they hated or, like Disraeli, took a perverse pride in their origins. Disraeli, incidentally, is one of Miss Arendt's pet hatreds. Although he did rise to the pinnacle of the "political realm" in one of Europe's most important nation-states, he was not redeemed by this participation in public affairs. Instead he transported the diseases of Society into the political realm. One may, of course, have various opinions of Disraeli as a statesman; one may

[19] *Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 27.

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 53.

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be little attracted by his romantic conceptions of the role of "the Jewish race" (to make him an important father-of-racism is sheer fantasy); but Miss Arendt's hysterical attack on him as an unmitigated charlatan has no basis whatsoever in any cool comparison of his accomplishments with those of other nineteenth-century British statesmen. All the others, one need hardly add, were in Miss Arendt's view men who emerged out of a long tradition of public life—hence non-charlatans by definition.

Could the Jews have possibly achieved true assimilation into the nation-state? Only, Miss Arendt contends, if they had as a group joined the healthy political forces—the revolutionary forces attempting to reverse the onward march of bourgeois society. Her heroine Rahel Varnhagen had tried to assimilate into German society and culture without realizing that the problem of Jewish emancipation was fundamentally political. Yet in *On Revolution* Miss Arendt makes it painfully clear that the healthy revolutionary forces of the nineteenth century were not at all prepared to adopt the kind of solution she considers essential for reversing the triumph of decadent bourgeois society. What is more, in France at least the radicals were themselves heirs of the enlightenment thinkers who "despised the Jews as a matter of course. . . . They saw in them the backward remnants of the Dark Ages and hated them as financial agents of the aristocracy." [21] Whether such radicals would ever clasp the masses of unassimilated Jews to their bosoms remains somewhat doubtful, to say the least.

In one passage Miss Arendt implies that at a certain indeterminate point in time "the powerful trends toward equalization of all citizens from the side of the state and incorporation of each individual into a class from the side of society" might have made assimilation possible had it not been for the continued perverse Jewish interest in group survival. Otherwise, it would appear that the Jews were doomed to remain in their "abnormal position" outside of the Society and nation. And while outside Society, they made their own contributions to its unfortunate development. Their financiers were deeply involved in the initial stages of imperialism and in an odd convoluted way they provided a kind of model for all those unhealthy forces in Europe that were most hostile to them. Anti-Semitic movements, Miss Arendt contends, tended to be transnational and rootless, rather like the rootless internationalist Jews they describe in their literature. It was not that Jewishness caused anti-Semitism but that the Jews and their enemies together helped to bring down the structured island of coherence represented by the nation-state.

One occasionally finds a theme in Miss Arendt that runs counter to the overwhelmingly negative account of Jewish rootlessness. There is a more positive aspect of this Jewish alienation from the nation-state, although it is a "surface phenomenon." [22] Precisely because of their cosmopolitanism, some few Jews were able to play the role of "good Europeans." While she thinks poorly of most Jewish intellectuals who were overwhelmingly concerned with assimilating to Society and mainly devoted to a petty pursuit of fame (not the *sacra fama* of political life!) "as reviewers, critics, collectors and organizers of what was famous," [23] she nevertheless remarks that the peculiar transnational situation of the Jews did lead to the "modern type of Jewish productivity in the arts and sciences" with which she, like Isaac Deutscher, undoubtedly identifies herself.

Above all, however, she is drawn to those who, like her heroine Rosa Luxemburg, became "genuine" revolutionaries. Yet in spite of her rapturous praise of Rosa Luxemburg, she feels obliged to reject her "self-decep-

[21] *Ibid.*, p. 13

[22] *Ibid.*, p. 23.
[23] *Ibid.*, p. 52.

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tion" on the national question,"[24] which led to an utter misunderstanding of the degree to which the working classes were organically—and wholesomely—linked to the nation-state. Nor can she deny that this failure of insight had something to do with her Jewish internationalism. In the end, both Rosa Luxemburg's errors as well as her insights into the true nature of revolution (which Miss Arendt links to her own) led her to failure, since this is part of the "dismal failure of revolution in our century."[25] Rosa Luxemburg provides a clear illustration of the degree to which the revolutionary political forces of Europe were unprepared to accept what cosmopolitan Jewish revolutionaries had to offer.

THERE WAS ANOTHER ALTERNATIVE: that the Jews constitute themselves into a nation-state of their own. This was, of course, the solution of political Zionism. There is one extreme variant of political Zionism that gives an analysis of Jewish history not entirely different from that of Miss Arendt, and we know that in the early thirties Miss Arendt herself was won for a time to the Zionist cause, only to turn against it after the war with all her characteristic vehemence. This turn to Zionism occurred at a time when her despair of achieving radical assimilation seems to have been most intense. In her article "Zionism Reconsidered,"[26] written in 1945, her querulousness is so diffuse that it is difficult to discover the heart of the matter. It appears that she favored something like a joint Jewish-Arab state. This was, of course, an eminently honorable view shared by many serious persons, although it is hardly consistent with her insistence elsewhere that ethnic homogeneity is one of the necessary ingredients of a healthy nation-state.

What particularly aroused her fury was the resolution of the World Zionist Organization of 1945 calling for the establishment of a *Jewish* commonwealth. Later, when a Jewish state did emerge, not as a result of resolutions but out of the vortex of events, her hostility was to become even more intense. One gathers throughout that she will condone a Jewish nation-state only if it conforms to her most classical ideals. Elsewhere she shows a deep understanding of why nation-states and their statesmen have fallen short of her civic ideals. Unlike antique Rome, these states were threatened on all sides by the encroachments of Society—by the bourgeoisie, by the mob, by the masses, and by imperialism. While she can understand why a splendid national representative like Clemenceau allowed himself to become the spokesman of French imperialism, she will not tolerate a Jewish polity that relates itself to the world as it is. She taunts the kibbutzniks in Israel for not relating themselves to the "wickedness of the world," but she will have no Jewish state that has any truck with the Imperialist Great Powers or that accepts "charity" from the bourgeois Jewish establishment of America, etc., etc. When one asks how the Israelis could have established a political entity in Palestine if they had accepted all her prohibitions, her reply is that a movement should have been launched "to organize the Jewish people in order to negotiate on the basis of a great revolutionary movement. This would have meant an alliance with all progressive forces in Europe."[27] "Palestinian Jewry" should have made itself the vanguard of this movement. The vagueness of this suggestion, while in line with previous Arendt doctrine, passeth understanding. With which progressive forces should the Jews have aligned themselves and which progressive forces were prepared to align themselves with the Jews? In fact, which "progressive forces" showed any prospect

[24] "A Heroine of Revolution," *New York Review of Books*, October 6, 1966, p. 23.
[25] *Ibid.*, p. 21.
[26] *Menorah Journal*, Autumn 1945, p. 162.
[27] *Ibid.*, p. 184.

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of realizing Miss Arendt's conception of the good society? (She ridicules those she calls the socialists.) With whom should the Jews have negotiated?

Whatever the answers to these questions may be, it was clear that meanwhile the "Zionists" had already failed to live up to Miss Arendt's ideal of political virtue. And yet, is it in fact true that her ideal of political virtue demands no compromise with evil, particularly in foreign affairs? As she points out, Pericles, in his famous oration,[28] and Machiavelli (another of her heroes) had both accepted the fact that political "grandeur" cannot be judged in ordinary terms of good and evil. The stratagems, tricks, and compromises described in Thucydides do not seem to shake Miss Arendt's faith in the public virtues of the Greeks nor do the chicaneries and deceits of European diplomatic history in eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century history shake her conviction that this was a period when a "comity of nations" prevailed. But the "Transfer Agreements" whereby the Jewish Agency was able in the early period of the Nazi regime to provide for the emigration of Jews on condition that the emigrants transfer their property in the form of German goods she treats not as an agonizing political decision but as an immediate proof of Nazi-Zionist collaboration.

MISS ARENDT'S VIEWS on alleged Nazi-Zionist collaboration lead us, of course, directly to *Eichmann in Jerusalem* and a consideration of the extent to which that disputed work must be viewed in terms of her whole "system." Without entering into the question of her treatment of evidence or attempting to discuss the questions raised in her book, I shall consider two themes that are closely linked, the analysis of Eichmann and the analysis of the role of the Jewish leadership in the Holocaust.

So far I have not treated Miss Arendt's conception of totalitarianism. For our purposes, it may suffice to note that totalitarianism is seen by her as a direct outgrowth of the triumph of Society, a disease that arises out of the disintegration of the healthy forces of the nation-state. Again and again we are told that totalitarianism is marked by the disintegration of the nation-state, of social classes, and even of true nationalism. The whole thing began when "the bourgeoisie grew increasingly hostile to national institutions and power."

I shall not enter here into the intricate chains of reasoning by which this bourgeois dominance produces the disintegration of classes and the emergence of the mob and masses which create the material for the organization of total domination. I shall simply register the view that, once in power, totalitarianism did *not* lead to the disintegration of the nation-state or social classes or nationalism, all of which continued to live on within the totalitarian matrix and then quite successfully survived it. Most important for our purpose here is that the real foundation of totalitarianism was to be the "masses of coordinated philistine job-holders and good family men who thought of nothing but safeguarding their private lives." (The Jewish value: life is the highest good!) For their private security, they were in fact willing to sacrifice everything to the totalitarian state.

It is fascinating to observe the extent to which Miss Arendt's Eichmann fits this preestablished scenario. Here we have the prototypical "normal" philistine job-holder, good to his family, without any real belief in any ideas and completely privatistic. It is also most convenient for Miss Arendt that Eichmann for his own self-serving purposes was quite anxious to construct a similar image of himself. When it suits her thesis, the sceptical Miss Arendt seems most anxious to lend every credence to his account (although she admits he is a liar).

Yet even her own version raises enormous

[28] *Vita Activa*, p. 200.

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questions. The young Eichmann seems to have been anything but a good job-holder by nature. Nor is it even proven that he was not touched by anti-Jewish ideas as a youth, in spite of his Jewish relatives and alleged Jewish mistress. We read that as early as his high-school days he joined the Jungfront Kämpferverband which was more likely than not anti-Semitic. Miss Arendt's proof that he never shared Nazi convictions is derived from his own testimony and contradicted by her assertion that he later displayed "telltale signs of an unregenerate Nazi outlook." [29] What is more, we know that in spite of his own cliché about "cadaver obedience," he was to show enormous initiative in undertaking the liquidation of the Hungarian Jews against Himmler's orders.[30] While he did not initiate the idea of the Final Solution, once he had made it his mission he was fully bent on achieving immortal fame and glory by carrying out his task with distinction and a full sense of its grandeur.

There were no doubt many "job-holders" among the hordes of Nazi functionaries. Contrary to Miss Arendt's dogmas, there also were probably many deeply imbued with Nazi convictions, profoundly interested in achieving honor, glory, and earthly immortality, and even displaying individual initiative in serving their cause. All of this was quite compatible with demonic evil.

The whole notion that ultimately the monstrous evils of Nazism were simply due to the lack of Miss Arendt's "public virtue" is in fact trivial. Were the German statesmen and politicians who had "tasted public happiness" during the Weimar period conspicuously more resistant to the Nazi plague than any other sector of the population? As a matter of fact, the only instance of genuine virtue cited in the entire book is a case not of public but of *private* virtue—the case of the German sergeant Anton Schmidt who actively helped Jewish partisans to escape and was finally executed for his deeds. He had probably been an obscure job-holder, and while we know nothing about his inner sources of strength, they probably had nothing to do with "public happiness" or the desire for earthly immortality.

Eichmann was a product of Society. But so were his victims, the Jews and particularly the Jewish leaders. Here too, however, we have seen that Miss Arendt's a priori views about the nature of "Jewish leadership" had crystallized long before the Eichmann book. As the leaders of a pariah group that could not be absorbed by the healthy institutions of the nation-state, they could not possibly act correctly. Devoid of political virtue and capacity, they were unable to achieve the radical assimilation of the Jews into the nation-state, and when one section of Jewish leadership did finally engage in the gloriously Roman act of founding a nation-state, this state fell far short of her stringent classical ideals (far less stringent when applied to other states). While never really accepted into the bourgeois class, they fully shared the moral responsibility of that class for the rise of totalitarianism.

I shall not here enter into the details of Miss Arendt's specific treatment of Jewish leadership during the Nazi holocaust. There is already a vast literature that has scrutinized her documentation and argumentation. Nor is it necessary to make a blanket defense of the enormous variety of human types she classifies under the category "Jewish leadership." It is most fascinating to note, however, that she nowhere explains why this nefarious Jewish leadership cooperated so eagerly in its own destruction as well as in the destruction of the Jewish people. In her *Origins of Totalitarianism* she implies that the dread power of totalitarian terror produces in its victims an acceptance of their fate, but in the Eichmann

[29] *Eichmann in Jerusalem,* Viking Press, p. 34.
[30] Miss Arendt accepts Eichmann's own explanation that he was simply obeying the spirit of Hitler's orders.

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book she is unprepared to allow this escape from moral responsibility. One can only conclude that the explanation is to be sought in her whole preestablished system. The Jewish leadership, devoid of political virtue and political capacity—a lack of virtue which manifested itself primarily in its inability to organize resistance—could only have pursued this damnable course. Her prejudice on this point leads her to slander a man like Leo Baeck, whose physical courage (one of the civic values she appreciates) compares favorably with her own and ours —simply because his conception of how to meet the catastrophe was not, in her sense, properly political.

WE ARE THUS DRIVEN BACK once more to a confrontation with Miss Arendt's views of Hebraism. We return to the Jewish sanctification of mere life and life maintenance, for it was, after all, this initial sin that led to the fatal decision to survive as a nonpolitical people even after the demise of the ancient polity.

It is, of course, true that the Old Testament reveals no contempt for the realm of biological necessity. No view of life that takes seriously the human person as a psycho-physical entity can afford to be contemptuous of biological necessity. Yet does the word "life" in the Hebrew Bible refer exclusively to sheer life-maintenance? Does the deuteronomic injunction "Choose life" really mean, "Choose mere physical survival"? I would argue that the word "life" refers here to vast areas of human experience belonging neither to the realm of mere life-maintenance nor to that of political action.

It might be well to remind Miss Arendt that some of our greatest dramas and "stories" have been written about precisely these areas of life—outside the political realm—in which men confront one another as "obscure," private human beings. Much of the Hebrew law and many of the events in the Bible are concerned with human as well as religious encounters in the area of human life, unsanctified by "public virtue." Martin Buber, not necessarily less discerning than Miss Arendt, was convinced that his I-thou conception was entirely consonant with the Biblical conception of life. It is, of course, quite true that this concept of life does not depend on "everlasting fame," [31] to give it significance (although the value of a "good name" is highly appreciated within the Jewish tradition). Yet historically it was a conception of life that in the middle ages led many of its adherents to martyrdom and collective suicide.

One of the many matters that arouses no curiosity in Miss Arendt is the nature of internal community life among the Jews through the centuries. Was there *anything* in it she might recognize as belonging to public virtue? One must assume that her reply would be No, since these communities had no "real" political power. Yet the "public affairs" with which they dealt were not necessarily less significant than the usual agendas of her cherished New England town meetings.

One need not deny that there were entire areas of political action in which the Jews had little experience during the last two millennia. The application of power in "foreign affairs" and the organization of physical violence were areas in which Jewish capacities had atrophied, although nothing in the whole tradition inherently ruled them out. One need but point to the Maccabean Revolt and the particular trend which led to the Zealot revolts against Rome. The failure to resort to physical force during the centuries of the diaspora was probably based in the first instance on a sober realization that any such attempt was absolutely futile. In the course of time this renunciation of violence clearly alienated the Jewish people from a familiarity with the uses of violence, whether offensive or defensive. Thus the

[31] *Between Past and Future,* Viking Press, p. 48.

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charge that until recently the Jews have lacked "political ability," including the ability to engage in the defensive violence of organized resistance, may have some ground. It may even account for certain simple-minded and absolutist views about the relations between ethics and politics which are often prevalent among Jews when they relate themselves to politics.

Thus it may be quite true that Jewish history of the last several centuries did not prepare the Jewish communities of Europe for the organization of physical resistance against Nazism. Neither that which was worst nor that which was best in the lives of these people—both leaders and led—prepared them for this role. As has been shown by others, Miss Arendt's "utilitarian" argument that such a resistance would have saved more lives is absolutely without foundation. Her attitude is not, however, fundamentally utilitarian. The fact that the Jews did not all go down fighting is rather a proof of their utter lack of "public virtue." I shall here confess, in the face of Miss Arendt as well as a certain segment of Israeli opinion, that I do not take the absence of these "Roman" civic-martial virtues to be a sign of total depravity.

The fact that, due to their powerlessness, Jewish leaders have through the centuries been placed in deeply humiliating positions has indeed been a misfortune. This was recognized by the Jews themselves, and it was the great merit of political Zionism to realize that under modern conditions, the sheer survival of the people may make it imperative to acquire capacities for political and even military power. That the Jews in Israel have acquired these capacities is cause for satisfaction and we must hope these capacities will continue to flourish. Misfortune, however, is not vice. The notion that the Hebraism of the last two millennia has been completely devoid of value because the Jews lacked the ambiguous virtues of political life (*pace* Miss Arendt: John Adams was profoundly aware of their ambiguity) must be repudiated, whether it is advanced by some Israelis or by their bitter opponent Hannah Arendt.

One should say a word about the relevance of Miss Arendt's ideas to our present circumstances. Many young Jews have turned against the "bourgeois" Jewish stress on "sheer life" in Hannah Arendt's sense, and it must be candidly admitted that in the United States there has been a tendency for many Jews to interpret their tradition in such a way as to accommodate it to what have been conventionally-called suburban values. The fact that life-maintenance is not despised and even sanctified in Jewish tradition has been used as a pretext to spread a thin veneer of God's blessing over a mode of life that has stressed, above all, material goods and the mechanics for obtaining them. At the same time, unless our young radicals are prepared to admit that they share Miss Arendt's religion of the political life as an end in itself and apart from metapolitical welfare goals, they must continue to have a certain Jewish respect for ordinary life-needs. Presumably their radicalism involves a commitment to the satisfaction of the life-needs of vast sectors of mankind.

Finally, a word about the relevance of Miss Arendt's political vision to the general "crisis of our times." Her dream of local "elementary councils" that would provide access to the "public space" on a local grass-roots level bears some resemblance to the ideas of those on the New Left who call for local participatory democracy. Unfortunately, like Miss Arendt, they seldom occupy themselves with the agonizing problem of how local participatory democracy is to be related to those developments in the modern world that seem to demand centralized control—in some areas, perhaps even more centralized control than we now have. If they are prepared to sacrifice or curtail these developments in the interests of local participatory democracy, they—like Miss Arendt—seldom descend to concrete discussions of what is to be discarded and how. Miss

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Arendt herself is, of course, able to avoid these details by adopting the Olympian stance of one who observes and does not prescribe.

Nevertheless, one can profoundly sympathize with the effort to reopen the whole question of local communal participation in political life. There may, after all, exist political problems which can best be solved on this level, and local government may indeed give some "public happiness" to many persons endowed with a taste for political life. Yet the whole notion that this is the sovereign remedy for all the spiritual, cultural, and social ailments of the age seems entirely wide off the mark. Miss Arendt herself candidly admits that even when and if her dream is realized, only the few will participate since "the political way of life has never been and will never be the way of the many." [32] The many would continue, it seems, to live lives of obscurity unillumined by worldly immortality. However, those who select themselves for active participation—so we are assured—will necessarily be "politically the best," for only those who as voluntary members of an "elementary republic" have demonstrated "that they care for more than their private happiness and are concerned about the state of the world would have the right to be heard in the conduct of the business of the republic." [33]

We cannot, alas, accept Miss Arendt's assurances. The melancholy fact remains that some of the most enthusiastic participants may continue to be persons animated by motives far more questionable than anything contemplated in her religion of politics.

[32] *On Revolution*, p. 279.
[33] *Ibid.*, 284.

Dostoevsky—Thou Should'st Be Living at This Hour!

The following report on a recent conference of the Weatherman faction of SDS is taken, word for word, from the January 10, 1970 issue of the pro-New Left paper, the *Guardian*. It appears under the by-line of "Liberation News Service." Bernadine Dohrn is a Weatherman leader.

Part of armed struggle, as Dohrn and others laid it down, is terrorism. Political assassination—openly joked about by some Weathermen—and literally any kind of violence that is considered anti-social were put forward as legitimate forms of armed struggle.

"We were in an airplane," Dohrn related, "and we went up and down the aisle 'borrowing' food from people's plates. They didn't know we were Weathermen; they just knew we were crazy. That's what we're about, being crazy motherfuckers and scaring the shit out of honky America."

A 20-foot long poster adorned another wall of the ballroom. It was covered with drawings of bullets, each with a name. Along with the understandable targets like Chicago's Mayor Daley, the Weathermen deemed as legitimate enemies to be offed, among others, the Guardian (which has criticized Weatherman) and Sharon Tate, one of several victims in the recent mass murder in California. She was eight months pregnant.

"Honkies are going to be afraid of us," Dohrn insisted. She went on to tell the war council about Charlie Manson, accused leader of the gang which allegedly murdered the movie star and several others on their Beverly Hills estate. Manson has been portrayed in the media as a satanic, magnetic personality who held near-hypnotic sway over several women whom he lent out to friends as favors and brought along for the murder scene. The press also mentioned Manson's supposed fear of blacks—he reportedly moved into rural California to escape the violence of a race war.

Weatherman, the "Bureau" says, digs Manson, not only for his understanding of white America—the killer purportedly wrote "pig" in blood on the wall after the murder—but also because he's a "bad motherfucker." (At least one press report explained the "pig" on the wall by saying that Manson wrote that in order to throw suspicion on black people.)

"Dig it, first they killed those pigs, then they ate dinner in the same room with them, then they even shoved a fork into a victim's stomach! Wild!" said Bernardine Dohrn.

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Richard Robbins

Up Against the Statler-Hilton Wall

Politics in the Scholarly Associations

THE DEMAND FOR DEEPER CHANGE in American society is an encouraging sign. Liberals, affirming their faith in the country, concede "the system" remains obdurate and search for policies beyond the New Deal. New Leftists, despairing of "the system," may yet move on from rhetoric and anger to disciplined action—and, then again, may not. Our man on the Democratic Left at least shares the liberal's concern and the radical's frustration. For all those along the political spectrum the question is not what to do, but how to do it.

Middle-class professionals, inhabiting a territory that touches the ghetto at one end and the gold coast at the other, have been increasingly troubled as to how to make the most effective personal contribution to social change. Given the demands of work and family, few can "give up everything" to become full-time activists. Yet, simply to "give up evenings" in behalf of Eugene McCarthy, the preparation of an ad in the *Times,* the organization of a peace march on Washington—all that seems not enough by half. They fall back, then, on their work. Middle-aged professionals and scholars are paid, after all, by "the system" to teach students, address readers, treat patients, defend clients, design buildings. Hopefully, through one's work and after work, one could say and do something relevant about the condition of American life. I can teach "conventional history" and work hard at getting history teachers organized in a union. Or I can teach "radical history" and work hard at infusing my students with the sense that they must do now what the Abolitionists did then.

Still, let us be candid. For some younger professionals and scholars this pluralism of choice seems unsatisfying. Indeed, it makes them very angry. For they see, and they say their elders are blind to, a new form of involvement—political confrontation within one's own professional association. If *our* professional society is a microcosm of everything that's wrong with *the* society, then why not begin at home?

Whether their intent is to make the association "more responsive" or to "radicalize our profession," the results are clear: the politicalization of what have traditionally been limited-purpose organizations. In the last three years scarcely a single professional association has been able to escape at its national convention a bewildering round of caucuses and counter-caucuses, endless demands and countless resolutions, sit-ins and walk-outs, "liberation movements" (radical, black, female) followed by an organized response on the part of those uneager to be told how they "shall" or "shall not be" liberated. The general business meeting, once lost in obscurity, is now packed to the walls, reverberating to cries of "point of order!"

This effort to make the annual conventions bear the weight of an activity they were never designed to sustain is clearly the result of a rising level of frustration among a minority of younger professionals. The war continues, the urban problems get worse, the police manhandle protesters; what is *their* association going to do about it? The frustration is compounded by a retrospective view of graduate school. Why, in law school, was there too much on torts and too little

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on law and poverty? Why did community health care have so small a place in medical school curricula? Should not the departments of physics have dealt with the relationship of scientific research to military-industrial sponsorship? The frustration is compounded by initiation into the annual ritual of the national meetings where jobs are sought, papers heard, friendships renewed. The meetings come to seem flat, stale, and unprofitable, there in the Sheratons and Hiltons, while outside Watts burns and Saigon makes a mockery of American purpose. Meanwhile older delegates, some conservative and some, ironically, more genuinely radical than the young Turks attacking them, react to the insurgent groups with pain and anger. Followed by more meetings!

ALL THIS POLITICAL ACTIVITY makes for livelier—though sometimes uglier—annual conventions. But if we are genuinely interested in significant social change, then the consequences of this corridor activism seem, to me at least, of little importance compared to what could be done by the same people in national and local political groups. Which is not to say that all is trivia. The association of Asian scholars has been compelled to give more attention to contemporary China, less to the ancient dynasties; the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), our most prestigious scientific society, is more committed to weighing the impact of scientific research on public issues; national associations as diverse as the librarians (who recently called for "a revolution in our profession"), the Catholic bishops, and the social workers have become aware of their obligation to crack the system of color discrimination.

I would argue, however, that such commitment was largely forced upon the traditional groups by events in the general society. Take the AAAS: its increasing responsiveness to public isues has been the result of policy changes initiated by the federal government, Congress in particular. The science action groups within the AAAS, with their rhetoric ("Science for the People") and their penchant for convention confrontation ("we invite community action groups to come in and tell it like it is to the scientists"), are actually turning away from the very national power structure they view as the core of the problem toward localism.

The conclusion that the meetings of the professional associations are relatively poor vehicles for social action is not one I reached in haste or out of pique. I have read the voluminous reports of the proceedings of the following societies (as well as brief accounts of others): The Modern Language Association, The American Political Science Association, The American Psychological Association, The National Council of Churches, The American Historical Association, the Unitarian-Universalist Association, The American Psychiatric Association, the national associations of Catholic bishops, of Reformed Jews, of Episcopalians, of specialists on Asian and on African studies. In all these were rival political groups. The tactics of the insurgents—mostly radical—ranged from forceful debate to dramatic demonstration to milling about. I have not looked closely at the scientific, engineering, chemical-corporate associations; perhaps the safest conclusion there is that these groups are being pressed into consideration of a really vital problem: the imbalance in natural science research arising from excessive involvement with defense agencies and corporations. This is a challenge of far greater importance than that internal restructuring of "oligarchical tendencies" which occupies so much time in "softer" fields such as the social sciences and humanities.

As for law and medicine, the American Bar Association and the American Medical Association are too conservatively entrenched to warrant a sustained effort at making them more progressive from within. They have had some sporadic disruptions—

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young doctors rushing to the AMA microphones on the platform to speak passionately to conservative colleagues from Dubuque on the appalling health conditions in the ghetto. But a young doctor, socially committed, might simply refuse to join the AMA. And Ralph Nader, all by himself and without the slightest interest in the ABA, has shown us what can be accomplished in the outer world for consumer protection. Young law students are eager to join him, their minimal salaries funded by small foundations. In any event, since the AMA and the ABA do indeed seek to wield power on a national scale, the place to contest them politically is all year long in Washington, not for a week in the New York Hilton.

If in what follows I confine myself primarily to the scholarly associations in the humanities and the social sciences, what is the basis for my rather pessimistic conclusion? From the great wash of oratory at these conventions and the stacks of leaflets turned out during Christmas and Labor Day holidays, I have been able to sift out two basic considerations: the internal and the external, each representing a common effort to challenge power and to democratize a system.

The fact is that, with few exceptions, these associations, drawn heavily from the univerisities, do not have much of a capacity *qua* groups to alter the shape of our society. Where the delegates have in some measure actually contributed to "shaking up the system" or "reexamining our national priorities," they have probably done so back home. When a nationally-known scholar is forceful enough to break through to a broader public, he does so on his own, in speech and print, and by joining with others in a political movement—far more than by trying to mobilize his professional association. We listen to a Hans Morgenthau (not the political science association) on the tragedy of Vietnam; to Martin Luther King (not the Negro Baptist associations) on just racial segregation; to Noam Chomsky (not the MLA) on the importance of the dissenting intellectual; to S. M. Luria and George Wald (as Nobel Prize winners and not as members of their respective associations) on the danger of supertechnology dominating science. There is just no nationwide, all-disciplines scholarly group that can possibly compete with political parties or trade unions. As a result, political conflict is forced into an internal and rather isolated frame within the associations, despite the appeals on the part of activist groups to "join up with the real world and its problems outside the walls of this hotel."

HOW IS THIS INTERNAL CONFLICT manifested? The insurgents demand that the association be more "responsive" and democratic, the meetings more "relevant" (which seems to mean a hundred different things) and livelier. There is also a demand that direction be wrested from an encrusted Establishment, an elite coalition of the permanent secretariat and the "stars"—the most famous from the prestigious universities and corporate-research entities. Finally, the insurgents usually promise that teaching will be made more innovative; let there be professionalism with a human face.

Has the great effort to unseat the internal Establishment and transform the bland annual meeting accomplished something of value? On balance, I doubt it. It is difficult to generalize: each association has different problems. Some observers are nevertheless prepared to concede that the insurgents have at least brought in a fresh perspective, new faces, a certain zest for annual meetings previously cut to a stuffy formula. This, it is said, ought to have a good effect on the scholarly professions, quite apart from resolutions on Vietnam and caucuses to put more anti-Establishment types on executive councils. One would expect to find a more open, creative approach to, say, teaching and research in American history. Possibly. But I have yet to see exuberance of spirit translated into meaningful reforms in graduate

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education by virtue of any activity at the meetings of national associations.

Even if we accept the idea that somehow ferment and fervor are bound to have a positive result, it can still be dangerous to the freedom of scholars if the assumption goes unchallenged that any "radical" insurgency is by definition on the side of truth and justice, any counterargument by definition a dreary defense of the status quo. In my own profession of sociology, for example, the New Left faction has been insisting that "a wave of repression" has been sweeping the academy in our discipline. Yet most of these people remain regularly employed in the universities. A few have been fired—that should be fought vigorously by all of us. Some have dropped out of "the system"—that is their option, not an instance of Marcuse's "repressive tolerance." As a matter of fact, when for a time the New Left sociologists came to power in the department of sociology at Simon Fraser University they proceeded to a repressive intolerance which meant open hostility to recruiting any sociologist not conforming to *their* party line.

I could cite a score of comparable examples of dogmatism and self-righteousness among the dissenting scholars which serve to vitiate some of the sensible proposals they *have* made and sometimes even suggest overtones of academic Stalinism updated. It is excellent that the radical historian Staughton Lynd challenged for the presidency of the American Historical Association Prof. R. R. Palmer, who as vice-president would otherwise automatically have ascended to the presidency. Real elections are better than pro forma elections anytime. But when Professor Lynd, as President Lynd, proposes to infuse the profession with "guerrilla history" and "street history"—whatever that means—it is enough to make one vote for Palmer, automatically.

Or consider anthropology. I attended a long 1968 session in Seattle of the American Anthropological Association devoted to "radical anthropology." Nearly all the young anthropologists in that packed room were for it, but no one could say just what it was. A radical black caucus, organized at the Montreal meetings of the African Studies Association, engaged in a continuing series of disruptions against those giving papers, black and white scholars alike. All right; debate and catharsis took place. But what are we to make of those in the black caucus who insisted that only Africans or black Americans could have the special insights to be specialists in this field? The establishment of an interim governing board, half black and half white, did not meet that question. Is it fair to ask how many white radicals in the professions are willing even to discuss what a black professional like Kenneth Clark freely discusses: the issue of black separatism?

Given limited gains and possible dangers, a reasonable version of the traditional approach—the "liberal" approach if you like—still appears to me worth preserving: attend the annual meetings if you need a job, want to give a paper *you* think is worthwhile, or if you would like to spend a few days with colleagues who share your discipline. Otherwise, don't go. And if you are genuinely committed to social change, organize a rival association. Better still, spend more energy on those academic organizations directly involved in the political process. Which is what some New Left people have come to realize in forming the New University Conference, "a national organization of

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Deep Thoughts: New Left Department

Changing the grading system [in universities] as a reform may be called counter-revolutionary because it obscures the nature of the university and ruling class interests, siphons off well-intentioned energies which could be attacking the ruling class, creates a false consciousness, and changes little or nothing.

Sandra Biblarz
in *et al,* Fall 1969

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radicals to work in, around, and in spite of institutions of higher education."

THREE CASE HISTORIES, perhaps not completely representative but characteristic of the intensity of conflict, will bear me out, I think, in asserting the limited value of confrontation politics in professional conventions. For background I am indebted to the editors of the *Antioch Review* (Fall 1969) who devote an issue to the politics of scholarship. They profess open-mindedness but most of the contributors operate from the double standard I have called into question; New Left sources are cited as unfailingly correct, other scholars and associations are invariably assumed to be part of an interlocking directorate controlling research resources and inhibiting free inquiry—David Riesman and Kenneth Keniston are singled out. In a critical article on a not-very-interesting educational magazine funded by the Esso Foundation at nearly half a million dollars, DISSENT is given high praise for producing a valuable journal of opinion for only $50,000 a year, no strings attached to big money. Yet the *Antioch* editors permit one of the contributors to charge, with absolutely no basis in fact, that one of DISSENT's editors is a willing participant in undercover research for the federal government!

Richard Ohmann, chancellor *pro tem* of Wesleyan University, who writes on establishment control of the Modern Language Association, is described by the editors as "one of the few scholars '. . . ever converted to socialism by writing my doctoral dissertation.' However, it took him ten years to realize the experience could be put to use." Yet there is not a single word in his article to show the results of his conversion unless by "socialism" you mean supporting a young professor, Louis Kampf, for president of the MLA against an older professor, or indulging oneself in easy contempt for convention papers on "Arboreal Figures in the Golden Age Sonnet." If, however, Senator Dodd of Professor Ohmann's Connecticut were running for president of the MLA instead of for reelection to the Senate. . . .

For all the slipshod material, however, the *Antioch Review* presents a useful compilation, especially on the three cases I have chosen: The Modern Language Association (MLA), the American Sociological Association (ASA), and the American Political Science Association (APSA). The MLA is a huge organization of English and foreign language teachers with 30,000 members and an annual budget of a million dollars. Prof. Ohmann is shocked that "a meritocracy of scholarship" governs the MLA, that so many of the papers are trivial, that the chances of an activist nonpublishing scholar from a small Midwest school of being elected president of MLA are nil. Nevertheless, he is pleased—as are many other scholars who see no reason to take a heroic "socialist" posture—that the MLA voted to condemn the immoral war in Vietnam, to resist Congressional legislation aimed at repressing college dissent, and to move its last convention out of Mayor Daley's Chicago. All laudable. I fail to see, however, that anything terribly significant has happened, much less that the MLA is now a vital instrument of social change, as Ohmann believes. Much ado about nothing (Shakespeare).

At least those in the humanities associations recognize the limits of their influence, so that insurgency is largely confined to "opening up" one's own organization. The radical coalition in the American Sociological Association, called the Sociology Liberation Movement, is a much more disturbing phenomenon because its young leaders built their organization around the assumption that the ASA, with its 12,000 members and million-dollar budget, is a conscious and powerful agent of conservatism in society.

Martin Nicolaus, writing on "The Professional Organization of Sociology—a View

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from Below," insists that the sociologists play an important part in legitimizing the oppressive class structure in America. I have argued with Mr. Nicolaus about this odd assumption elsewhere.* Here it suffices to say the ASA leadership would be astonished to discover it commands such vast power; it lacks the skill for playing such a role, even if it wanted to. Its sporadic involvement in dubious work for the government abroad—Project Camelot in Chile, Michigan State's "pacification" work in Vietnam—reflect the naiveté and obtuseness (and maybe greed) of some sociologists, not their integration into some vast sociological power elite.

Much is wrong with the sociological discipline, to be sure. Yet it is simply not important enough on the national scene to perform the powerful servicing function Mr. Nicolaus attributes to it. Seeking to persuade us that the opposite is true, the Sociology Liberation Movement only succeeds in moving toward a conspiratorial theory that bears little relationship to the society the SLM criticizes so severely. Thus, we are told, Max Weber's primary goal was to conduct "an epic campaign against Marx" which led Weber eventually to an emphasis on value-free sociology and the bureaucratization of modern life, which led . . . to Nazism. Conservative oppression is now carried on by the modern "functionalists," a troika of Talcott Parsons, Robert Merton, and Lewis Coser, aided and abetted by those who worked for Western Electric (Elton Mayo) and for the military (Samuel Stouffer). This tight conspiracy comes right down to the 1969 convention in San Francisco—another transfer from Mayor Daley's Chicago—where Nicolaus finds sociology in deepest decline, "Simmel/Coser and Billy Graham, the left wing of functionalism and the right wing of Richard Nixon," brought together in political coalition!

The "domestication" of Marxism and the end-of-ideology thesis in American sociology is a matter for serious debate. But the SLM's internal-external ideology only compounds confusion. Moreover, it threatens to ruin the legitimate interest of many young sociologists in internal restructuring. Did the SLM accomplish anything at San Francisco on this count? Not really. Radical counter-conventions were held across the street from the Hilton. (The program cover

* Martin Nicolaus, "Remarks at ASA Convention," and Richard Robbins, "Who Will Liberate the Sociology Liberation Movement?" in *The American Sociologist,* May 1969.

The Higher Criticism

ROMEO AND JULIET *may be about some people who lived a long time ago, but it's chock-full of the kind of idealistic lies that help keep capitalism going today.*

First of all, the movie makes you identify with the rulers of feudal Italy, the big "lords" who controlled the land. None of the Montagues or Capulets ever did a minute's work; they seemed to have no time for anything but lavish parties and squabbles. But who sewed all the beautiful clothes? Who prepared the food? And who tilled the vast expanses of land? Where are all the peasants and workers who produced the wealth that enabled the lords and ladies to live so effortlessly? It's just like all the "modern" movies where you never see the workers who create the affluence of the rich capitalists. . . .

Secondly, we are fed the lie that love between a man and a woman means that they get along perfectly. Romeo and Juliet never argue. When they saw each other for the first time, they immediately fell in love without knowing anything about each other, (except, of course, that they were both upper-class enough to be at the party of a feudal lord). And the beautiful, all-powerful force called love magically takes away all of their personal frustrations. The only problem they have is that their families are feuding. The line of the movie is that if only we weren't "star-crossed lovers" and "fortune's foes," if only we had better luck, we'd be happy.

This line hurts people; it discourages us from struggling to solve our problems. . . .

From *Challenge,* (organ of the Progressive Labor party), September 1969

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shows C. Wright Mills, blind-folded, motorcycle behind, being shot down in front of the Pentagon by a firing squad of conventional sociologists.) Buttons were distributed: Sorokin Lives! The late Professor Sorokin, once secretary to Kerensky, a distinguished sociologist, a bitter critic of "sensate" contemporary society and of superficial methodology in sociology—and the last possible man to choose as a revolutionary hero! At one point the radical group crossed the street, took over the general ASA session, and sought to conduct a memorial service for Ho Chi Minh. (Would the SLM have honored a request from the floor for equal time for memorial services for Norman Thomas?) The insurgents, "the most militant caucus in the social sciences," won a majority at the meeting on various resolutions. But the net result, sadly, was all style and mood, a politics of theater. The ASA is about what it was, no better, no worse.

The American Political Science Association (APSA), a very large and influential group disposing an annual budget of $2.5 million, represents a somewhat different and possibly important story, for here the question of internal restructuring does have some bearing on the external structure. Allan Wolfe, in "Practicing the Pluralism We Preach," (also in the Fall 1969 issue of *Antioch Review*) is able to show in considerable detail that something like an "iron law of oligarchy" does prevail. So far, no more than the MLA situation. But there *is* more. The entrenched group in the APSA has actually functioned in many instances as a supporting arm of governmental policy aimed at preserving the status quo and curbing innovation in the political process. The executive director—who still remains in office—had concealed ties with the CIA. Particular congressmen are singled out for special awards, and internships with Congress are funneled through the same small group in the APSA. The result, Wolfe holds, is a "new conservative" political science, too closely linked with, and deferential to, Congress and the regulatory agencies. And the whole system is further reinforced by preselected slates for office in place of elections. (Wolfe writes wistfully and somewhat enviously of Mr. Nicolaus's "reactionary" ASA where even nominations, let alone elections, can be overturned by members' write-in votes. In this nonradical way was Pitirim Sorokin finally elected to the ASA presidency he very much deserved. Sorokin Lives!)

Clearly the APSA requires internal reform. Clearly, in some contrast with MLA and ASA, it interlocks far too tightly with official federal government. But again, would internal restructuring, however more significant than in the other cases, make a difference in the direction Nixonism will take on national policy? Wolfe thinks possibly. I think not. For while the APSA is now undoubtedly going to become *more* change-oriented—to use Wolfe's language—the national government is most likely to become *less* change-oriented.

If there were space to include other cases—notably the associations of historians and psychologists—I believe my initial conclusion would be reinforced: annual conventions and permanent secretariats are not substantial agencies for achieving change within one's discipline, let alone in the society at large. Far better to work in nonacademic groups for political action. Or write a powerful tract, alone, in one's study.

LET ME touch briefly on the external problem that I have drawn from the round of annual meetings: should limited-purpose associations pass resolutions for and against a multitude of domestic and international policies adopted by one's own and other governments? I would answer "yes," while recognizing that there is room here for honest difference and that the argument is not as simple and straightforward as it appears at first, even where the Vietnam war

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is concerned. It is understood that the denunciation of Mayor Daley will not really restructure the politics of Chicago, or a denunciation of the war deter the generals in Saigon. Nevertheless it is worth doing; I am with Chancellor-socialist Ohmann to that degree at least.

There are those, however, far more politically engaged in the broad sense than I am, who would nonetheless take a contrary view. They hold that professional associations, once embarked on this course, will bog down in endless dispute—today Vietnam, tomorrow South Africa, then Israel, Franco Spain, and so on. Could not the association take no position *qua* group on these external problems while encouraging its members to follow their individual political consciences when they return to their communities? Otherwise, would not the association be impinging on the civil liberties of dissenters within its own ranks if in its own name it passed a resolution in behalf of the total membership?

Some holding this view would be willing to modify so strict a definition when it could be shown that the vital interests of the professors were directly threatened. So, scientists and social scientists would have no difficulty condemning the department of Health, Education and Welfare for maintaining a blacklist of scholars judged unacceptable on political grounds for grants and consultantships.

Granted that limited-purpose associations can get beyond their depth on these matters. All the same, I see nothing lost and something gained—if only symbolically—in any national professional association, whether it be of English teachers or archeologists, setting out the views of the total membership (if polled) or merely those present in convention on such issues as the draft, Vietnam, military weapons, racial injustice. The membership claims no special wisdom. The association's delegates are not saying that a profound knowledge of Melville converts you into an authority on the Antiballistic Missile. What they are entitled to say is simply that if there is something called a decent and humane society, then we, a group of specialists meeting here in Pittsburgh, want to call attention to what seems to us an assault upon that decency and humaneness. The American Dental Association, out of concern for the health of American children, is not deterred from moving out into the political community where interest groups are in conflict over fluoridation of the water supply in cities throughout the country. Out of concern for the needless deaths of Vietnamese men, women, and children massacred by American soldiers at Songmy, should not the American Dental Association vote a condemnation of our own government at its next convention for permitting this atrocity to take place? I think it should. I'm confident my own dentist would vote "for."

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In future issues we will print other articles on the topics raised by Mr. Robbins, from a variety of points of view.—ED.

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Stanley Moore

Utopian Themes in Marx and Mao

A Critique for Modern Revisionists

Our usual policy is not to reprint articles from American magazines, but we feel that the one below is important enough to warrant a departure from that policy. It first appeared in the Monthly Review, June 1969, and is here reprinted with permission of that journal and the author. Our readers will note similarities of argument with both Erazim Kohák's "Requiem for Utopia," which appeared in our January–February 1969 issue, and Benjamin Schwartz's "The Reign of Virtue: Thoughts on China's Cultural Revolution" in the May–June 1969 issue.

BEFORE HIS STUDY of French revolutionary politics and British political economy, in the period when he was criticizing Hegel's theory of the state from the standpoint of a radical democrat, Marx proclaimed as his ideal mankind's return from *Gesellschaft* to *Gemeinschaft:*

> That self-reliance, that freedom, which disappeared from earth with the Greeks, and with Christianity vanished into the blue haze of heaven, must again be awakened in the hearts of men. Then only will they seek as their highest goal moving from society (*Gesellschaft*) to a new community (*Gemeinschaft*), to a democratic state.

In Marx's early communist writings, from *The Jewish Question* to the *Manifesto,* the contrast between *Gesellschaft* and *Gemeinschaft* reappears as the contrast between *bürgerliche Gesellschaft*—together with its complement, *politischer Staat*—and *Gemeinschaft* or *Gemeinwesen.* The first pair of terms he uses to describe the present; the second pair, to describe both the past and the future. In later works—the *Grundrisse,* the *Critique of Political Economy,* and *Capital*—this contrast is developed on its economic side into the comparison of exchange economies with natural economies that reveals the secret of commodity fetishism. In *Capital* exchange economy, class or classless, is contrasted with four nonexchange economies, class and classless. Viewed from this standpoint the communist economy of the future differs more from a capitalist economy than it does from a feudal economy or the economy of a self-sufficient peasant household.

The demand for a rebirth of community is a central theme in Marx's critique of capitalist society. What Hegel calls the transition from *Sittlichkeit* to *Moralität,* and Tönnies calls the transition from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft,* Marx reverses in his account of the transition from capitalism to communism. The proletarian revolution has, therefore, not a single but a double task. Negatively, it must abolish exploitation by establishing a classless economy. Positively, it must construct a new community to replace the old society.

To recognize this second task is to discover a common source for the utopian themes in Marxism. Is it not enough for proletarian revolution to abolish the division of labor between wage-workers and capitalists? Why does Marx suggest in *The German Ideology* that communism will eliminate *all* division of labor? Is it not enough to abolish the commodity exchange which masks cap-

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italist exploitation? Why does he suggest in *Capital* that communism will eliminate *all* commodity exchange? Is it not enough to abolish the legal rules which mask capitalist dictatorship? Why does he suggest in his *Critique of the Gotha Program* that communism will eliminate *all* legal rules? And is it not enough to abolish the moral rules which mask capitalist class-interest? Why does he suggest in the *Manifesto* that communism will eliminate *all* moral rules? The less radical of these demands define the transition from class to classless society. The more radical define the transition from the abstract egoism of the old *Gesellschaft* to the mass fraternity of a new *Gemeinschaft*.

Can the two tasks be completed simultaneously? To ask this question is to understand the contrast drawn by Marx in *The Communist Manifesto* and *The Critique of the Gotha Program* between two stages of communism—in Lenin's terminology, between socialism and communism. The socialist principle of distribution—to each according to his contribution—marks accomplishment of the first task, the transition from class to classless society. The communist principle of distribution—to each according to his needs—marks accomplishment of the second task, the transition from society to community. Transition to socialism is inaugurated by establishing proletarian dictatorship; transition to communism, by withering away of the state.

To read Marx critically is to find in the distinction between these tasks the expression of a central tension in his thought. On the one hand, his theory of history is a sociology of change, focused on analyzing the interaction of technology and institutions. On the other hand, it is a dialectic of liberation, focused on exposing the sham freedoms of capitalist culture. Marx developed the dialectic of liberation before the sociology of change: in his terminology, he was utopian before becoming scientific. But in retaining his vision of a rebirth of *Gemeinschaft,* he failed to complete the transition. In his mature thought this tension is reflected in his separation of the two tasks of proletarian revolution. His account of the transition from capitalism to socialism is very largely based upon his sociology of change. By contrast, his account of the transition from socialism to communism is almost entirely based on his dialectic of liberation. Some of those earlier speculation which the *Manifesto* calls utopian are more firmly grounded on analysis of the interdependence of institutions and technology than is the Marxian vision of a new *Gemeinschaft.*

II

IN THE SEVENTY YEARS before the Russian Revolution, utopian themes in Marx's thought were not extensively discussed—by Marx himself, by Engels, or by their social democratic heirs. (The revisionist controversy focused on the transition from capitalism to socialism, largely ignoring the transition from socialism to communism.) In the course of the last half century, however, obsession has replaced neglect. Today, both inside and outside countries where communists hold power, discussion of Marxian theory centers on problems connected with the vision of a new *Gemeinschaft.*

Outside the organized communist movement this shift of emphasis has resulted from the spreading influence of existentialist interpreters of Marx. From early Lukacs to late Sartre, the practical impotence of these isolated thinkers has been balanced by the grandiosity of their theoretical demands. Their attempt to reinterpret Marx from an existentialist standpoint has involved increasing stress upon his dialectic of liberation, at the expense of his sociology of change. The moral judgments in writings of his youth receive more attention than the contributions to history and social science in writings of his maturity. The focus of discussion shifts from the problem of exploitation—which is central for the transition from capitalism to socialism—to the problem of alienation—which is central for the transi-

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tion from socialism to communism. The evils of alienation, as Marx presents them throughout his writings, cannot be ended simply by ending exploitation. Their cure requires nothing less than a new birth of *Gemeinschaft.*

Russian communists and their followers have consistently opposed the existentialist interpretation of Marx. Yet Lenin and Stalin —holding power in a backward, isolated country—were led by a different path to a parallel emphasis on utopian themes. Had not Marx himself considered sympathetically the suggestion that nineteenth-century Russia might leap from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gemeinschaft,* without a capitalist *Gesellschaft* in between? His heirs, confronted with the staggering problems of raising Russia to the economic and political level of industrialized capitalist countries, chose in part to deny the existence of those problems by proposing shortcuts to the new *Gemeinschaft.* Lenin, between the February and October revolutions, wrote more concerning the transition from socialism to communism than Marx wrote during his whole lifetime. At the level of theory, he proclaimed in *State and Revolution* that on the first day of proletarian revolution the state starts to wither away. At the level of practice, he established in Russia a system of minority rule that has lasted for half a century. Stalin, when Soviet economic production was still below the level reached under the Czars, proclaimed the possibility of an unaided transition from socialism to communism. At the level of practice he directed, at enormous cost, the transition from a backward agricultural economy to an advanced industrial economy, comparable with those of developed capitalist countries. At the level of theory he discussed, with stupefying irrelevance, the transition from socialism to communism. His method of unifying theory and practice was to institutionalize schizophrenia.

By contrast with Lenin and Stalin, whose deeds failed to match their words, Mao has actually attempted to lead China from the old *Gemeinschaft* to the new by a process of uninterrupted revolution. Coming to power three decades after Lenin, he advanced the claim that preindustrial China could effect its transition from socialism to communism before industrialized Russia. His first attempt to prove this claim was the Great Leap Forward, which was primarily an economic movement. His second attempt has been the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, which is primarily political. Their moral counterpart has been the campaign of propaganda against material incentives. At the level of theory, these developments mark the last stages in eliminating from Marxism its empirical and rational elements—its degeneration into a mass mystique of rebirth in *Gemeinschaft.* At the level of practice, Mao's dialectic of liberation seems to culminate in what undialectical people call repression—an unlimited and unquestioning subordination of individual to collective wills.

Outside of China, the Maoist demand for *Gemeinschaft* NOW has won sympathizers within the widespread renaissance of anarchism. And to the degree that this new anarchism is combined with existentialism, two major traditions claiming the heritage of Marx have found a common ground. Those New-Left theorists who advance the double claim that alienation is the central problem and Maoism is the key to its solution compound the attractions of communist and existentialist irrationalism.

Q. *Are the major functions of the Green Berets in Vietnam torture and assassination?*
—Arthur Unger, Fayetteville, N.C.

A. *The Green Berets have engaged in such practices in Vietnam in line with obtaining intelligence, but those are not their chief functions. According to Col. Alexander Lemberes, former commander of the special forces group, the major functions of the Green Berets in South Vietnam are to act as school-teachers and sociologists.*

Walter Scott,
Parade, Sept. 28, 1969

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III

A STRIKING FEATURE of current disputes among Marxists is the accusation that large groups of lifelong communists are engaged in restoring capitalism. Maoists assert that Yugoslavian communists—two decades after the proletarian revolution—are reversing the transition from capitalism to socialism. They also assert that Russian communists—half a century after the proletarian revolution—are moving in the same direction. But this charge is not monopolized by Maoists or directed solely against these governments. In nearly every communist quarrel throughout the world, between countries or within countries, one group accuses another of taking the capitalist road.

Examined in terms of Marx's theories, this charge is indefensible. Stressing material incentives is not proof of restoring capitalism. That such emphasis is common to socialism and capitalism is indicated by the socialist principle of distribution—to each according to his contribution. Nor is employment of market mechanisms proof of restoring capitalism. Though a necessary condition for capitalism, commodity exchange is not a sufficient condition: what Marx calls simple commodity production is a classless exchange economy. The crucial prerequisite is for a minority to acquire as their private property a decisive portion of the means of production—land, raw materials, factories, machinery. Without evidence that this transfer of ownership is actually occurring in Russia or Yugoslavia, the charge of restoring capitalism seems nothing more than paranoid abuse.

Examined, however, in terms of what has happened to Marx's theories, the charge is understandable. Marx had envisaged roughly the following sequence: precapitalist *Gemeinschaft,* capitalist *Gesellschaft,* socialist *Gesellschaft,* communist *Gemeinschaft.* Lenin, Stalin, and Mao—coming to power in preindustrial societies and strongly impelled to treat drawbacks as advantages—increasingly stressed the possibility of a less complex and protracted development. Mao has envisaged roughly the following sequence: precapitalist *Gemeinschaft;* mixture of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft;* communist *Gemeinschaft.* Viewed from his standpoint, any trends toward *Gesellschaft* in a communist country—except during a short period immediately following the proletarian revolution—amount to taking the capitalist road. Having started by identifying classless society with *Gemeinschaft,* he ends by identifying *Gesellschaft* with class society.

Mao's sympathizers among the existentialist-anarchists reach a similar conclusion by a different route. A major economic tendency of liberalization movements in communist countries is to increase the role of commodity exchange. A major political tendency is to increase the role of representative government. The socialist society resulting from such trends would differ from capitalist societies in being classless. Yet in other respects its economic organization, political processes, and cultural values would resemble those of a developed capitalist society more than those of a precapitalist or a communist *Gemeinschaft.* From the standpoint of these existentialist-anarchists, however, the decisive issue is not ending exploitation but ending alienation. Viewing commodity exchange and representative government as major sources of alienation in capitalist society, they do not welcome the program of communist liberalization. Having started by identifying *Gesellschaft* with alienation, they end by identifying liberation with *Gemeinschaft.*

Both lines of argument proceed from utopian premises to reactionary conclusions. An example is the comment on Russia's occupation of Czechoslovakia written by Paul Sweezy, from a Maoist standpoint, for *Monthly Review.* He devotes half of his article to arguing that the Czechoslovaks—like the Yugoslavs and the Russians—by increasing the role of the market are objectively restoring capitalism. Their subjective aim he characterizes in his conclusion as

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"some kind of a democratic socialist utopia." It is a formula that harks back to the *Manifesto*: utopian theory, reactionary practice. But whom does it fit better, Czech reformers or Maoist Chinese?

IV

THE ORIGIN and influence of the Maoist caricature of Marx's dialectic of liberation can be explained in terms of Marx's sociology of change. Under preindustrial conditions—according to the *Manifesto*—the revolutionary theories that accompany the proletariat's first struggles for emancipation have necessarily a reactionary character. They advocate universal asceticism and social leveling in its crudest form. Mao's propaganda against material incentives advocates universal asceticism. His cultural revolution advocates social leveling in its crudest form. What are from his standpoint foundations of communism are from Marx's standpoint stigmata of preindustrial utopianism. The most implacable opponent of Maoism is neither a clique of individuals nor an alliance of vested interests: it is the socialist industrialization of China.

By contrast, the growth of liberalization movements within industrialized communist countries poses problems internal to Marxian theory, by dramatizing the tension between Marx's sociology of change and his own dialectic of liberation. Reforms increasing the economic role of commodity exchange, increasing the political role of representative government, and decreasing the authoritarian uniformity of culture can be defended as urgent necessities for developing and strengthening socialist *Gesellschaft*. Are they not prerequisites for providing to each socialist citizen—in fact as well as words—a standard of living and a degree of economic, political, and cultural autonomy which compares favorably with those enjoyed by the average citizen in an industrialized capitalist country? Yet these same reforms can be attacked as abandoning the attempt to establish a communist *Gemeinschaft*.

Faced with this challenge, theorists of the liberalization movement have two choices. Like Marx, Engels, and the social democrats, they can protect their theoretical ideal by assigning to some distant generation the practical problems of attaining it. Or, as modern revisionists, they can purge Marxism of its utopian elements—rejecting those claims of its dialectic of liberation that are unsupported by its sociology of change.

V

THROUGH WHAT chains of reasoning does Marx suggest that division of labor, commodity exchange, and control of conduct by general rules will be wholly eliminated in the course of communist development? To the extent that he supports assertion with argument at all, he reasons along these lines. Because general rules apply the same standard to individuals in widely different circumstances, the abstract justice of moral or statute law is experienced concretely as unfairness. Because commodity exchange transforms relations between men into relations between things, the abstract freedom of the market is experienced concretely as compulsion to treat other men as things. Because division of labor increases men's collective powers of production by decreasing each individual's range of action, the complex culture resulting from such specialization is experienced concretely by most producers as compulsion to act like machines. In each case total elimination of the social arrangement in question is presented as a *moral* imperative—as necessary for establishing a community where the free development of each is based upon the free development of all. In no case is total elimination presented as a *technological* imperative—as necessary for adjusting men's relations with one another to a new stage in the development of the forces of production.

As moral reasoning, Marx's discussion of these issues falls far short of careful analysis. He was acquainted with arguments of Plato that provide qualified support for his position

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on the desirability of eliminating control of conduct by general rules, legal or moral. He was also acquainted with arguments of Rousseau to the effect that control by general rules is an essential prerequisite for individual morality and political freedom. Yet he neither considers the qualifications introduced by Plato nor refutes the arguments advanced by Rousseau. In his discussion of this complex issue, blunt assertion takes the place of theoretical analysis. Again, he was acquainted with arguments of Rousseau that provide qualified support for his position on the desirability of eliminating division of labor and commodity exchange. He was also acquainted with arguments of Hume answering those of Rousseau. Yet he neither considers the qualifications introduced by Rousseau nor refutes the arguments advanced by Hume. In his discussion of this complex issue, blunt assertion once more takes the place of theoretical analysis. Had he treated economic questions in this brusque fashion, all of *Capital* would be no longer than the *Manifesto.*

As sociological reasoning, Marx's discussion of these issues fails to carry him from some to all. He offers evidence and argument to show that *some* forms of specialization have become obsolete in the course of past technological development. But he offers neither evidence nor argument to show that future technological development will permit —much less require—elimination of *all* forms of specialization. Again, he offers evidence and argument to show that economic regulation *solely* through market mechanisms will become incompatible with continued technological development. But he offers neither evidence nor argument to show that further technological development will permit—much less require—planned economic regulation which makes *no* use of market mechanisms. Finally, he offers evidence and argument to show that control of conduct by *some* general rules is at once the mask and mechanism of capitalist exploitation. But he offers neither evidence nor argument to show that an industrialized classless society can—much less will—dispense with *all* such rules. Earlier proponents of a new *Gemeinschaft,* sacrificing technological for moral gains, proposed to break down existing economies into small, self-sufficient, productive units, utilizing simple techniques. Is not Marx's vision of a new *Gemeinschaft,* based on a large-scale, complex, industrial technology, far more utopian than theirs?

Marx recognizes that capitalist *Gesellschaft,* with all its defects, has come nearer to realizing his ideal of universal free development than has any precapitalist *Gemeinschaft.* Yet he is not content simply to advocate establishing a classless *Gesellschaft,* by abolishing exploitation. Instead, he views the transition from capitalism to socialism as preparation for a more radical change—emergence of a new *Gemeinschaft,* which will differ from all its predecessors in fostering rather than frustrating full development of every man's potentialities. This second goal, however, fights against the first. At the level of theory, the dialectic of liberation in terms of which Marx prophesies the transition to communism is inconsistent with the sociology of change in terms of which he predicts the transition to socialism. At the level of practice, viewing socialism as a prelude to communism has proved a serious hindrance to facing, rationally and empirically, the problems of improving existing socialist societies. The experience of half a century dictates rejecting—as romantic and utopian in theory, oppressive and reactionary in practice—the Marxian call for a new birth of *Gemeinschaft.*

VI

WILL THIS theoretical approach be adopted by liberalization movements in communist countries? Without predicting the outcome, one can point to both favorable and unfavorable circumstances.

On the one hand, current conditions seem to rule out dodging the issue by a program that affirms the utopian ideal in theory but

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postpones indefinitely its practical realization. The response of Marx and Engels to attacks from Bakunin is unlikely to be effective against attacks from Maoists and Stalinists. Utopian themes are now the focus of theoretical controversy throughout the communist world. Without explicitly rejecting Marx's vision of a new *Gemeinschaft,* theorists of the liberalization movement can neither defend their immediate program nor define their ultimate goal.

On the other hand, in European communist countries most of the theoretical critiques of Stalinism have been formulated in utopian terms. Adopting the existentialist interpretation of Marx, such theorists attack oppressive cultural, political, and economic institutions in terms of the struggle against alienation. To the dreary scholasticism of Stalin's *Dialectical and Historical Materialism* they oppose the revolutionary utopianism of Marx's *Economic-Philosophical Manuscripts.* Yet this philosophical critique of alienation is too apocalyptic in approach to guide a gradualist, empirically oriented struggle for reforms. Pushed to its rigorous extreme, the critique of alienation leads past Stalinism toward Maoism. Restricted to eclectic compromise, it dresses moral truisms in philosophical jargon. For finding a theoretical approach that can integrate its immediate demands and clarify its basic aims, the liberalization movement must turn elsewhere.

Are there prospects for such a turn? Up to the present, theorists of liberalization have come largely from literary and philosophical circles: an existentialist-anarchist viewpoint is congenial to such groups. There are signs, however, that an alternative approach is emerging among those scientifically oriented intelligentsia, technicians, and administrators who are proponents of liberalization. An empirical, positivistic viewpoint is congenial to these groups; and there are grounds for believing that their influence will increase. Literary and philosophical rebels might be suppressed indefinitely. But to the extent that the Russian and Chinese leaders currently in power continue to industrialize their economies and to provide their entire youth with technological and scientific education, they are digging their own graves. Increasingly Stalinism and Maoism will be attacked, not only as offenses against human decency, but as fetters upon the forces of production. Andrei Sakharov's *Progress, Coexistence, and Intellectual Freedom* marks the opening of this era.

WHAT THEN may be expected from such revisionists? Negatively, the rejection of obscurantist verbiage and incoherent dreams, even when the verbiage and dreams are those of Marx. Positively, an agreement to work, in the spirit of what Marx called scientific socialism, for a just society and an individualistic culture—where the free development of each is both enriched and restrained by the free development of all his fellows.

They will seek no New Jerusalem. Only a time when human progress ceases to resemble that cruel god who scorned to drink the nectar, except from the skulls of the slain.

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S. M. Miller and Pamela Roby

Education: The Answer to Poverty?

The best long-term bet [for combating poverty], we think, is simply education. Despite some encouraging studies of compensatory programs, experience suggests education is a better engine of social advancement than any alternative. And partly because too much energy has been wasted arguing other things, the nation's cities have yet to evolve a truly comprehensive and coordinated school program for slums. Such a program would require spending more money on slum schools than even on suburban ones.—*Wall Street Journal*

THE FACTS are striking: the lower the level of education, the higher the rate of unemployment and the lower the level of income. The obvious need in reducing poverty is to increase educational levels of the poor.

Economists, proponents of government poverty programs, and educators themselves support this conclusion. The growth of the American economy, some leading economists argue, is largely the result of investing in "human resources," in the education of the labor force. Therefore, increasing the education and skill levels of the labor force is a prerequisite for better living and will solve many American problems by stimulating economic growth.

Manpower strategists also support the conclusion that education is the answer to the needs of the poor. They point to "structural unemployment," the mismatch of available people and jobs. The total number of jobs, they contend, is not insufficient; rather, the unemployed lack the skills and education to fill the available jobs. Therefore, they conclude, education will reduce poverty by enabling formerly unskilled individuals to fill the new jobs in the American economy, or by reducing the number of dropouts so that manpower programs will be less needed in the future.

Despite its importance, however, education is not the simple panacea for deep-seated American ailments that it first appears to be. Educational programs alone cannot solve all problems of poverty. The educational strategy for poverty reduction suffers from four major limitations:

- it neglects many poor people;
- its goals are difficult to achieve, requiring a radical redistribution of resources and first-rate staffs;
- it is only partially effective for those youths who do obtain education because discrimination and other factors intervene between education and income;
- its heavy emphasis on education unexpectedly damages individuals and society by constricting alternative channels of occupational mobility and by restricting the pluralism of social values.

From the perspective of human resources, education is viewed as an investment enabling individuals to support themselves. In this approach to poverty, education is aimed at improving the prospects of the young. By working directly with youth rather than with

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their families, these strategists hope to sever the relationship between the position of the family and that of its offspring. But this strategy not only neglects the families of the youngsters, it overlooks others living in poverty: the aged, the working poor who do not receive enough to maintain their families, and families that must depend on transfer income (welfare). It also neglects those youngsters who are unable to succeed in school while their families live on low incomes.

Furthermore, the goals of the educational strategy are difficult to achieve. Their implementation requires both redistribution of educational resources and recruitment of personnel who can improve education in low-income areas. Today the issues of poverty are essentially questions of inequality. If as the poor extend their educational attainment those who are better off extend theirs, the gap between the two may not be reduced. Therefore, educational resources must be *redistributed* as well as increased if poverty is to be reduced. If the poor are to catch up, they must get proportionately more of the new resources now being allotted to education. Politically this is extraordinarily difficult to achieve. Only a minority of the policy-makers who now support education as a human resource are asking that it be used as a means of redistributing national resources. And because all groups are striving to improve their education so as to improve their economic prospects, redistribution is unlikely to take place in the near future.

The history of recent years is not reassuring in regard to the redistribution of educational resources. The Syracuse University study of school expenditures, conducted by Alan Campbell, Jesse Burkhead, Seymour Sachs, and associates, is to the point. It shows that in 1962, in 35 of the largest metropolitan areas expenditures in central cities, where there are many children of low-income families, were $145 per pupil less than in their contiguous suburbs, where there are few children of low-income families. One of the most disturbing findings in the investigation is that, relatively, more state funds go to the suburbs than to the cities. In state aid, suburban schools receive $40 more per pupil than city schools. Even more disconcerting, the gap between funds allocated to cities and suburbs is widening: the 1962 difference did not exist in 1958, for then the two areas were spending the same amount.

The objective of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 was to insure that more federal resources would go to the poor than to people with higher income. We lack statistics on who really did benefit from the ESEA monies, but we have been told that many school superintendents channeled these funds to children whose conspicuous talents would enhance their prestige and to children of influential people rather than to the poorest youth in their districts.

AFTER QUESTIONING the level and distribution of educational resources, we must also ask, "If we had adequate monetary resources, would we have the capacity to implement our educational goals in the way we know they should be implemented?" The answer is probably, "No." Not only money, modern school buildings, and technological equipment such as teaching machines, but *people*—teachers and administrators—are required for effective education. Like so many other things, the capacities of teachers and principals are distributed roughly along a "normal curve." Only a few are very effective, a few very ineffective, and most are "average." Money devoted to new methods of training and guiding teachers and administrators may improve the effectiveness of the "poor" and the "average" teachers, but it is doubtful whether any technique can make all teachers as effective as those few talented and concerned individuals who stand out in our minds as great. Such outstanding individuals are the most important educational need of low-income youth in Appalachia, Harlem, or Watts. And this need is not easy to fill.

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Thus, increase of expenditures does not guarantee the availability of a staff adequate to the challenge of improving the educational performance of the disadvantaged. And recent failures of programs designed to improve educational performance of the disadvantaged have dampened the hope that in the future many of the other heralded "breakthroughs" will succeed.

A one-to-one relationship does *not* exist between education and income. Therefore, even if we could meet the educational needs of all youth, education would only have a limited effect on their future incomes. The know-how that is required in addition to education for many positions, the racial discrimination that occurs in the recruitment and selection of employees, and the uneven rewards of various levels of educational attainment intervene between education and income.

Manners, style of life, and know-how are considered in the selection of individuals for many jobs. Whatever his educational credentials or knowledge, the man who speaks ungrammatically, wears an outdated suit, has spent several years without a job (unless he was a student or a millionaire's son seeing the world), the man who does not have the right words for the right situations, or whose "good hours" do not fall into a regular schedule (preferably nine to five) is at a definite disadvantage in today's occupational world. Most social learning takes place outside of school and depends upon one's friends or family. For some persons, behaving the "correct way" means following the family's traditions, the family's culture. For others, the "correct way" means breaking with the family's way of life. The anguish of such a break has frequently been described in psychological and sociological literature.

Discriminatory practices also continue to intervene between education and income and thereby to limit the educational strategy. The following survey of educational, occupational and income data demonstrates that education alone does not produce occupational and income equality for blacks.

Black mothers, fathers, and students have *already* embraced the educational strategy because they consider education the most effective, if not the only sure means of advancement. Dorothy Newman, who has summarized the findings of several studies, reports that among poor families, black parents tend to be more interested in their children's schooling and more ambitious for their children than white parents.

Not only do black parents value education, but their offspring are now obtaining more education than heretofore. Since 1960 young Negroes have radically narrowed the education gap which traditionally existed between nonwhites and whites. Between 1960 and 1968 the difference in median educational attainment of white and nonwhite 25- to 29-year-olds shrank from 1.9 years to 0.4 years. The difference separating the percentage of nonwhites and whites possessing high-school diplomas has also declined. However, the gap separating the percentage of whites and nonwhites graduating from college remained unchanged, for while the number of nonwhites completing college increased, the number of whites doing so increased at an equivalent rate.

To date, blacks have not reaped the monetary or occupational rewards that education delivers to whites. At every educational level, nonwhites earn less than whites. In 1966 nonwhite college alumni still earned less than white high school dropouts. Between 1958 and 1966 the income gap separating nonwhite and white males with one or more years of college grew from $2,131 to $3,095. A portion of the discrepancy between black and white earnings may be accounted for by differences in the quality of black and white education. Another fraction may be attributed to the higher concentration of blacks working in the South where wages are low. But discrimination, unfortunately, is the only factor which can account for a major portion of the difference. As Otis Dudley Duncan has noted, findings of the

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survey of Equality of Educational Opportunity show that a wide variety of measures of school quality do "not vary by race as much as most analysts had hitherto assumed." Paul Siegel has also found that differences in white and nonwhite occupational and regional distributions accounted for only 27 percent of the mean 1959 earnings differential between white and nonwhite high school dropouts and high school graduates, 45 percent of that between white and nonwhite college dropouts, and 16 percent of that between white and nonwhite college graduates.

Sharp differences exist not only between the earnings but also between the occupational distribution of blacks and whites. Even college graduation does not completely protect blacks from being treated differently than whites in the occupational arena. Differential treatment applies to the younger as well as the older age groups. Only 8 percent of nonwhite as opposed to 30 percent of white 16- to 21-year-old high school graduates who had not enrolled in college were able to obtain clerical and other white-collar jobs in 1964.

Nonwhites at every educational level were not only employed in lower paying, less prestigious occupations than whites, but their chance of even obtaining work was also considerably lower than that of whites. The unemployment rates of black college alumni and high school graduates in all but the 35- to 44-year age group were two to three times those of white college alumni and high school graduates.

These data indicate that discrimination continues to intervene between education and income, between education and occupation, and between education and chances of employment. Indeed, with the aid of education, nonwhites do gain higher incomes, more prestigious occupations, and a smaller risk of unemployment. But, unfortunately, the roots of black poverty lie in the discriminatory practices of the larger society and not only in blacks' lack of education. As long as discrimination exists, education alone will not solve the problems of redistributing incomes and occupations between whites and nonwhites.

THE RELATIONSHIP between education and income for whites as well as nonwhites is further complicated by the upward movement of the tipping point where the "payoff" for education is greatest. For poverty reduction, the issue is not just more years of education, but moving people toward points where the level of education makes a difference. More and more today, the significant cleavage in the society is between college graduates and noncollege people. For example, Duncan has noted that there is greater dissimilarity between the occupational distribution of white and nonwhite high school graduates and college dropouts than between college graduates. Although blacks rapidly increased their median educational attainment during the sixties, the difference between the percentages of nonwhite and white males graduating from college remained constant and that between females increased. The gap between the occupational rewards whites and nonwhites gain from education is greater at the level of high school graduation and some college short of graduation than at the level of college graduation; thus blacks, given their present educational trends, are likely to suffer increasing relative deprivation despite their educational progress.

Furthermore, the strategy of our educational system assumes that the economy will absorb and recompense those who have a higher education. At the present time, this assumption seems undebatable. People possessing education do get higher incomes in the United States. However, if all people improve their education, is there an automatic guarantee that they will be absorbed at higher job levels than before? People who have acquired a higher education may be rapidly absorbed today while there is a

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shortage of well-educated people and a large reservoir of people with relatively low levels of education; but they may not be absorbed when this reservoir disappears and all people reach a higher educational level.

Style of life preferences, discriminatory practices, and uneven rewarding of various levels of educational attainment intervene between education and income. The educational strategy must be supplemented by other efforts.

America's recent "degree worship" has negative consequences for society as a whole as well as for individuals. The emphasis on education has the unanticipated effect of stressing social control and a limited range of values. Schools today are not a humanizing or an educational force as much as a credentials agency, sorting out people who do not fit into the regular channels of educational development. Because our schools function more to certify that individuals are not harmful than to develop the potential of all students, the present educational strategy tends to limit the pluralism of society's values and institutions. Education socializes the young to certain values and warehouses them by keeping them out of the labor market and out of mischief. In part, mandatory education (through law or threats of poverty) conditions low-income youth and strengthens established values. The educational strategy is aimed at helping people to fit better into the existing occupational structure rather than at constructing new policies that would directly aid the poor. Many of the present educational objectives obviously appeal to those who do not want any significant change in the present structure of American society and economic life.

The overemphasis on education not only frequently restricts the creative growth of our society; it hurts millions of individuals. By forcing all persons to enter the occupational world through the school gate, we have drastically underestimated and underutilized the potential of many low-income youth. Today over one-fourth of white and nearly one-half of our Negro youth are dropping out of school before they complete high school. In ghetto communities the proportion is higher. Some ghetto youths drop out rather because they feel the need to prove themselves "men," earn money and become independent of their parents' small earnings, than because their schools were "bad." Many young people whose culture stresses the importance of masculinity need new inroads into the occupational world other than "better schools." Today "dropouts" who have gained valuable experience in the work world find that this experience is ignored by employers because the label "dropout," assigned at the age of 14 or 15, persists throughout a lifetime. Consequently, individuals who may have outgrown the issues that propelled them out of school continue to be economically disenfranchised. With our increasing emphasis on academic credentials, our Chinese walls of exclusion grow ever higher for persons who are ignored because they lack the magical diploma although their occupational experience and performance prove that they are qualified. The loss resulting from an overemphasis on credentials is society's as well as that of the penalized individuals.

"Education" can become a mere slogan to help us escape from the wider responsibility of aiding the poor. Although of great importance, it cannot solve all the problems that produce poverty in our present American society.

Education, as we conceive of it today, in its strategy is essentially youth-oriented. It is unlikely to improve the situation of the aged or of many mothers who are receiving welfare. Therefore, when we consider educational spending from the point of view of the poor, we must weigh the value of this approach against that of other strategies for reducing poverty. Should more money be spent, for example, to provide cash income to poor families in the hope that the increased family income will lead to improvement of school performance of youth? This

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is both a question of whether to emphasize families or youth and of whether investing in families or in schools affects educational performance most.

Education partially improves economic prospects of blacks and helps them deal more effectively with agencies that dispense services. However, rising levels of education do not insure the reduction of the occupational and income gaps which persist between whites and blacks in this country; we must fight discrimination more directly. Nor does education ensure the transfer and transformation of power, which is a growing issue as blacks struggle for a late twentieth-century version of equality.

For education to enrich rather than constrict, men must be free to choose whether or not they wish to use it. One of the paradoxes of our time is that education, which is to be a liberating force, has become a prison for many. Employers' current emphasis on academic credentials forces individuals to remain in school and makes education a form of coercion; when youths do not follow the schools' mandates, they are sentenced to unemployment, uselessness, and poverty. Until our young people are offered alternative entryways into the occupational world, the pressure of *having* to make it through the educational system will continue to be debilitating to many.

In the thirties and forties education, charged with a wide range of tasks extending beyond the narrow confines of developing skills and knowledge, was to develop the "whole child," which meant socializing him so that he fit more easily into American society, developed good manners, was patriotic and a "good citizen." In the fifties and early sixties the burden of desegregating American society was left to the children and the educational arena rather than to adults who were wary of the task. In the late sixties the reduction of inequalities has been largely given over to the schools. Obviously, our schools can make an important contribution, and perhaps they have already done so, but they cannot be assigned the entire burden of reforming the American social structure. We ask too much of the schools and too little of the rest of society.

U Thant As Moralist

WHEN AND IF *a full and accurate account of the Biafran tragedy is written it will surely be a tale of incredible blundering and endless betrayal on the part of all those involved. No one—neither the leaders of the Biafran people who led their followers into a hopeless trap and then fled the country, nor the Great Powers who lined up remorselessly behind the Nigerian leadership—will come out of this episode untainted.*

But perhaps the prize for immoral behavior and political bankruptcy in the Biafran story belongs in advance to U Thant, Secretary-General of the United Nations. His role as a partisan supporter of the Nigerian leadership reached its peak during the 24-hour visit he paid to Nigeria immediately after the Biafran collapse. Never moving out of the Nigerian-controlled cities, U Thant gave his assurance that all was well: there was neither mass starvation nor murder. The UN's moral decline is matched by the cynicism of its Secretary-General.—S. P.

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Howard Zinn

More on Civil Disobedience

MICHAEL WALZER * JUSTIFIABLY WANTS to loosen up the traditional definition of civil disobedience to include the kinds of mildly coercive acts and limited resistance to police that he found in the sit-down strike of 1936–37. Surely this is one of the advantages of history; it evokes situations that test rigidified principles and so opens us to new possibilities, to better principles. But we are using this opportunity badly if we stick too closely to the circumstances of the historical event we are looking at and fail to let the event suggest larger possibilities. I find two such limitations of vision in this essay.

FIRST, WHY does Walzer insistently stop short of a challenge to "the legitimacy of the legal or political system"? Why must civilly disobedient persons recognize "the moral value of the state"? Neither Thoreau nor Tolstoy—both believers in civil disobedience—did. If we can expand the definition of civil disobedience in the way he suggests in this essay, why can't we expand it further to include acts that are not accompanied by any general feeling of obligation to the state (as opposed to specific feelings of obligation on certain occasions)? True, a term should have some specific meaning of its own. Therefore Walzer wants to distinguish civil disobedience from revolutionary action. But why are the two mutually exclusive? You may think that revolutionary changes are needed in society, yet you are not ready to engage in a revolutionary act now—indeed, you are not sure what acts would result in revolutionary changes. So you engage in limited acts of civil disobedience, but without any commitment to stop there if those acts should open up the situation.

Why is Walzer so concerned for "the bounds of civility" where the state is concerned, and not where the corporation is concerned? Of course, we want not only to have some day a nonviolent society of kindly relationships, but we would like to approach that model even in our tactics. Our problem is how to get from an uncivil social system to a civil one, knowing that an insistence on totally civil (noncoercive, nonviolent) tactics may not work in many situations, and yet not wanting that fact to diminish our scrupulous concern to maintain our humanity as far as possible while seeking change. Walzer recognizes this problem for the corporation, where he is willing to go beyond civility in the face of an oppressive situation, but not in dealing with the state.

Has he already prejudged the issue, deciding that General Motors in 1937 was oppressive, but the United States government in 1969 is "democratic"? He doesn't expressly say this because he speaks always of "a democratic state" in the abstract, rather than of this state, here, now. His distinction between how to act toward General Motors and how to act toward "a democratic state" is therefore unreal; he is mixing a specific situation with a theoretical one.

Very few corporate bodies, Walzer says, "reproduce the democratic politics of the state," meaning electoral systems, parties, judicial procedures, channels for rank-and-file participation. This implies that he believes all these elements in the American system make for a "democratic politics." But what if the electoral system is controlled by wealth and power; what if the two-party system only gives you one more choice than the one-party system—and a poor one; what if the judicial procedures operate on behalf of the privileged; what if the "channels" for rank-and-file participation are either blind tunnels or mazes? What if the FBI plays the same role in the nation as Ford's secret police played for him? Surely the

* "Corporate Authority and Civil Disobedience," by Michael Walzer, DISSENT, September–October 1969.

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national government mustn't show exactly the same characteristics as General Motors to be just as oppressive. And while an ununionized GM can keep you poor, a "democratic" but controlled government can render you dead.

Walzer distinguishes between the corporation where "there can be no binding commitment until the best possible democratic procedure for establishing rules has been adopted" and the "democratic state" where there is "a prima facie obligation to obey the laws of that state." Again, I assume that his "democratic state" is the United States, and I am astonished that he gives this description so easily. The whole notion of obligation—so dear to traditional political theory—is based on a static view of the state. It is this or that, democratic or authoritarian, and so you decide whether you are obligated or not. But states are much more complex, more shifty, and so must be obligation. Does not the United States today neatly fit Walzer's prescription for the corporation "where there can be no binding commitment until the best possible democratic procedure for establishing rules has been adopted"? And does this not immediately rule out the "prima facie obligation to obey the laws of that state"?

Isn't there a stronger connection between the corporations and the state than is suggested by Walzer's essay? Governor Frank Murphy's approach is hardly a typical example of state action. Can't the state afford to look "democratic" precisely because the real power and wealth rest with the corporations—even after they are unionized? I am astonished again to read that "the history of liberal government is a history of retreat . . . from the total support . . . of industrial magnates, and so on." I don't read American history that way at all. I see a clear line from Hamilton's fiscal program in the 18th century, to the Railroad Acts of the 19th Century, to the Oil Industry's power in the 20th century. The control of government by wealth today is more complex, more disguised, more pluralistic than before (of course, not "total"—it doesn't have to be), but probably more entrenched than ever in our history. Surely I am stating the obvious—but can political theories ignore the obvious?

THE SECOND LIMITATION of vision is in Michael Walzer's application of the General Motors events to the student movement today. He leaves us in the position of being more open to civil disobedience—but only if the student actions could resemble the situation in Chevrolet plant # 4. By narrowing the criteria (for instance, that the oppressiveness of the corporation can be specified "in some rational way") he is conveniently leaving the students without a cause because the university is clearly not like GM. It is, no doubt, a much happier and freer place. But there may be a grievance connected with the university that is just as severe, even if it is not as direct: for instance, the university's functioning as an adjunct of a cruelly aggressive war, whether by military-connected research or by ROTC programs. Was Walzer not willing to condone action against the state when the state (however democratic) represented the interests of the oppressive corporation? Why not action against a university (however free) when it represents the interests of an oppressive state?

TO ME, THE MOST VALUABLE POINT in the essay is the one on majority rule. We develop fixations about certain concepts; one of them is majority rule. Walzer points out that "Majority rule does not operate very well in the early stages of the struggle for democracy, when the majority is likely to be both passive and frightened. . . ." This is important because we face the problem today of changing society in a situation where the majority has been socialized, from kindergarten on, to accept God and country, the white man and Western civilization, the sanctity of property, money as the measure of worth. Minorities may need to break through this manufactured majority will, testing its thickness, giving it a chance to be recreated behind another way of thinking, by forcing people to make choices they did not anticipate. The tactical aspect of this is that occupation of buildings is particularly suited to minority action. It gives time, and "Time is the best test of the support the strikers actually have among the passive majority. . . ."

We probably need to examine all traditional concepts—"obligation," "democracy," "elections," etc.—with a similarly creative approach to help us deal with the intricate problem of how to change modern, industrial, totalitarian, liberal society.

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Washington Henry

On The Trail of The American Hero

WHAT IS A MAGAZINE these days without its judicious film critic, whether for scene significant or kitsch unlimited: Stanley Kubrick cannot be too heavy, nor Peter Fonda too light. But why do they all read like Polonius? Maybe their trouble—at least where Hollywood flicks are concerned—is to take each one so gravely as an aesthetic whole. Hollywood movies can't be that—most of them are made by committees of little boys. But they are photographed these days by wizards—so that you may not realize until you are down the street and into the coffee-shop that you have watched in fascination the unfolding of nothing whatever. With suitable anxiety and the aid of a proper Polonius, you may *never* realize it.

Meanwhile one could trace in the films that are most soberly merchandized and discussed the continuing search for an American dream-hero, who takes new forms to suit new needs. The latest hero is turned out younger, cooler, and softer to the touch—and he would rather be killed than a killer be. He comes encased in a woolly delicacy, so sensitive, so vulnerable, that nothing can reach him short of death. The "contact" scenes in the pictures I am about to describe are nearly 100 percent unbelievable. The "image" is that people do not much affect one another; the younger the hero, the more likely he is to rise above that sort of thing. Certainly he is not going to win his true love. Winning is out altogether. It is death he is bound for, and none other mistress. His consort is usually another male anyhow, and one or both lovers are certain to bring down murder from the big fuzzy establishment-in-the-sky.

Easy Rider is the prototype of the genre, partly because it takes itself so seriously. Peter Fonda throws away his watch (nudge, nudge), puts a big American flag on his back (nudge, nudge), and goes off sitting across the southwest on his star-spangled bike, in quest of . . . "getting my thing together." He stares ahead soulfully to his apocalyptic demise, lapsing into speech now and then to proclaim universal truths on the order of "you do your own thing in your own time." He is systematically passive in his picaresque encounters—a series of tableaux painted up as Earthy Farm Life, Beautiful Youth Commune, Redneck Restaurant, Getting High Around the Campfire, and Naked Acid Trip through the Cemetery. It is announced that Peter and his Panza are "threatening" to America because they "represent Freedom"—and sure enough, they are abruptly shot from their steeds, in a piece of stunning photographic work that sent viewers into the street with proudly blown minds. The thesis is that America—which "used to be a helluva good country"—is now engaged in the massacre of its young. The success of the picture—in esteem as well as at the box office—makes it clear that the premise is useful and the hero appealing. And to grant his last wish before the massacre, the big ole country is turning over its movies, its magazines and its liberal sensibilities.

Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid duck the heavy symbolism by playing Western robbers as a total put-on. They specialize in cool wisecracks as they move from one fiasco to another. Eventually they are slaughtered by hundreds of Bolivian troops. Sounds like straight farce, but it isn't made that way—the two robbers are glamorized as men of style and wit. They are heroes who shoot straight but never kill until they are accidentally on the side of the law. The idea is to show a new mode of grace in action. But the result is a picture that is simply unbelievable. Since Paul Newman and Robert Redford don't care what happens to them, one is constantly aware of

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actors in a movie taken by their own cuteness. The sensitive, grainy camera work makes the falseness of content all the more obvious. In ten years *Butch* may be called camp. But even now it has its appeal to those for whom life has been reduced to a series of poses in the face of monolithic retaliation—with the corollary that movies, with their cleaner, clearer poses, are realler than life. The actors and audience for this film might have been created by the Beatles, like the "pretty nurse selling poppies from a tray/and though she feels she's in a play/she is anyway."

Midnight Cowboy puts its heroic couple in a more human position. Neither deadpan symbols nor campy cop-outs, Jon Voight and Dustin Hoffman play vagrant hustlers in New York's Times Square district. When they are most real —in their actual hustling, in their contact with would-be victims—the film proceeds with intensity and feeling. But the story line deserts the tawdriness of hustling for a Runyanesque cuteness and a maudlin death rattle.

Hoffman and Voight are extremely skillful, but one loves them finally as actors, as clowns, as sad sweet teddy-bears, rather than as characters in a meaningful film. Their reality as heroes exists *outside* the film—as surrogates through whom one fumbles and dies with overwhelming charm.

They Shoot Horses, Don't They? is one more skillful picture which collapses through the dead weight of its symbolism. The Real America here is a depression dance marathon stirred into pointless and vicious animation by the fake enthusiam of the forever-exploiting ringmaster. The hero is a human cypher whose only distinctive act is his effort to dance eyes-closed in a beam of sunlight. Yet in his wiped-out plum-faced innocence he attracts the two belles of the ball: the tinsel Harlow, Susannah York, and the steely Jane Fonda, both so full of vitality they threaten to explode the simple-minded dreariness of the conception.

Jane Fonda in fact is such a gleaming-eyed toughie that it is perfectly unbelievable when in the end she asks plum-face to kill her. It would work better with another Fonda, or with Jane pulling the trigger on plum-face. With his frozen cupid mouth and stunned bambi eyes, plum-face wouldn't have to strain at playing dead. A pure victim, a case of infant mortality, you can't blame him for what he does. They shoot horses, don't they? The excuse would serve as well for My Lai.

Alice's Restaurant is in its way the most earnest of these films. It makes an honest effort to show young members of the "counter-culture" in their nonsymbolic complexity and confusion. Alice and Ray want to create something different and better for the young people around them, but their moments of spontaneous beauty pass all too soon—and with all too much banality—into helpless bitterness. Meanwhile Arlo Guthrie, the hero of the piece, has nothing better to do than wander through the story singing his song, grinning at people and patting them, and either offending them or turning them on with his long hair. Arlo is a fragile boy who seems to fold in sweet misgiving when confronted with a line like, "Don't crowd him, he's trying to get his head"—or when, with really daring bad taste, the film compels him to re-enact hospital visits to the dying Woodie Guthrie. Arlo would be the most pathetic victim of all if he took his film seriously, but he's so cheerful and unpretentious—as in his song—that he communicates straight *through* the movie. He lets us know he shares with us our embarrassment. He knows that the movie itself is part of what it is fighting: the super-media-construct pouncing on our feelings and strivings to turn them into manufactured items that cheapen and betray us.

I went to see *Hello, Dolly* hoping to find in Louis Armstrong's brief appearance a glimmer of manhood in a style so unfamiliar and unappreciated that it would put all the rest to shame. Sure enough, Hollywood once again

(*continued on page* 192)

TO CONTRIBUTORS

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Norman S. Care

On "Democratic Pluralism"

THE STATE IN CAPITALIST SOCIETY, by Ralph Miliband.
New York: Basic Books. 292 pp. $6.95.

RALPH MILIBAND, of the London School of Economics, has prepared a careful defense of a socialist critique of "advanced capitalist society." The main burden of this defense is to show that the theory of "democratic pluralism," which Miliband associates variously with Galbraith, Dahl, and Aron, is inadequate as a characterization of modern capitalist society.

Miliband's efforts to show this are probably convincing on the whole, though they may risk indicting democratic pluralism for something it does not attempt. There is a difference between showing what a society's structures are and exhibiting how apparently new trends in a period of change may come to dominate its social life. Democratic pluralists often make it seem that they are attempting the latter rather than the former task. Miliband may be prepared to argue, of course, that the two tasks cannot be performed independently, though he does not do so in the present volume. In any case, even if democratic pluralism fails to describe society accurately, this would not be sufficient to conclude that the description involved in socialist criticism is accurate. But it is Miliband's further argument, and the most important feature of his general line of thought, that the critical resources of socialism still provide the best understanding of the workings of contemporary capitalist societies.

Thus, against the claim that advanced industrial societies in the West are "beyond" analysis in terms of a struggle between economically dominating and dominated classes, Miliband offers an account of the structure of those societies that makes the traditional categories of class warfare seem apt. The pluralist view that a modern society is internally a network of interest groups, which sometimes collide and sometimes cooperate but cannot individually dominate each other, is rejected by Miliband as a "resolute escape from reality." These days the battles between those who have and those who have not may be conducted by representatives of "interests" who "bargain" within the limits of the "national interest," but in fact the capitalist framework rigs all encounters in favor of those who are within the complex political-military-business-educational establishment which directs and serves private enterprise. Nowadays that framework may countenance the protection of civil rights and "open" competition for jobs and status; but the freedom and equality this suggests are too often empty of content within the structures of advantage and hierarchy that are typical of a capitalist system. Finally, when political "neutrality" is claimed for business leaders, civil servants and "technocrats," even members of the judiciary, it is again Miliband's point that the context operates to support a bias in the professional activities of such men in favor of capitalist enterprise.

Miliband, it is important to note, is not a conspiracy theorist. He is concerned with avoiding accusations of deliberate intentions to dominate and manipulate. Conspiracy theory is too often "crude and sentimental demonology" which pushes attention away from those structural features of a social system that must be changed if class domination is to be avoided. Miliband is perhaps most Marxist and most interesting at this point in his account. For even when the intentions of the establishment are humane, the fact that efforts at reform are attempted within the categories of thought,

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attitudes, and behavior characteristic of private enterprise ultimately frustrates or side-tracks them. And, as frustration sets in, the natural reaction of the establishment to the increased demands of people tantalized by prospects of greater and more widespread well-being is a tightening of the controls on opposition and dissent—a move, perfectly understandable in the circumstances, toward what Miliband calls "conservative authoritarianism."

Miliband describes in valuable detail the resources and techniques of pressure that the dominant capitalist establishment commands in the double process of maintaining itself and eroding opposition from the Left. His final prognosis is gloomily consistent with his high estimate of the degree of entrenchment of capitalist enterprise, namely, that any realization of the "socialist alternative" in advanced Western societies is simply unlikely in the foreseeable future; whereas what is likely, given the "pervasive sense of unfulfilled individual and collective possibilities [which] penetrates and corrodes the climate of every advanced capitalist society," is the taking up of the "authoritarian option" by the establishment.

THE CASE MILIBAND BUILDS against democratic pluralism, as he construes that theory, is a solid and important one, even though many of its parts are familiar and some tediously repeated. My main difficulty with the argument concerns two aspects in which it is incomplete. Miliband never makes plain either what the socialist alternative is or, more important, what it presupposes. He touches on these matters, of course. For example, the alternative involves at least "the appropriation into the public domain of the largest part of society's resources":

> Opponents of capitalism believe it to be a system whose very nature nowadays makes impossible the optimum utilisation of resources for rational human ends; whose inherent character is one of compulsion, domination and parasitical appropriation; whose spirit and purpose fatally corrode all human relations; and whose maintenance is today the major obstacle to human progress.
>
> Bourgeois politicians and governments view the system in precisely opposite terms—as most closely congruent with "human nature," as uniquely capable of combining efficiency, welfare and freedom, as the best means of releasing human initiative and energy in socially beneficent directions, and as providing the necessary and only possible basis for a satisfactory social order.

This passage itself suggests why the assumptions of socialism are important, and why a lack of systematic discussion of them is a matter for concern: (a) ultimately these presuppositions are the basis of the critique of capitalist society as well as the recommended alternative; (b) in major part they constitute a theory of persons, or what classical theorists called a theory of "the nature of man"; (c) how one interprets them will finally determine, I think, the strength of one's commitment to socialism. Capitalism's faults, according to a socialist critique, are traceable to the fact that it is *humanly* irrational. That is, it does violence —in ways that are the theorist's burden to make clear—to the nature of persons. In one or two places Miliband suggests that this irrationality may be understood as the inability of a capitalist system to provide for "genuine and urgent human needs." It is worth noting that Marx, at any rate in the *1844 Manuscripts*, had a different, more metaphysical view, according to which the fault in the operations of the institution of private property was that they affected men in such a way that their "essence," viz. their "laboring function," was detached from them and placed under the possible control of another.

Whatever the difference between these views, the point is that the socialist critique rests on an account of human nature that is useful only so far as it can be explained and justified. The point seems to me crucial, for in the end the reason for anyone's being intellectually persuaded that capitalism is wrong and socialism right lies in the acceptability of that account of human nature.

Now, in the absence of a firm justificatory account of the assumptions about persons underlying the socialist critique and recommendations, the possibility of a certain "mixed" position emerges, I believe, pretty nearly untouched by Miliband's critical work. According to this position society's resources are apportionable between the public and private domains, in accordance with the demands of the principles of liberty, justice, and need. Central premises of this position (which admits of many variations) are that a morally tenable

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system is one that meets moral criteria efficiently and that it is not logically absurd to suppose that a system operating in part according to recognizably capitalist principles can meet these criteria. Miliband occasionally denigrates "weak reformism" within capitalist societies, and he speaks of the inadequacy of attempts to "humanize" those societies. These, I suppose, could be variants of this mixed position. But so could be "strong reformism" and even "welfarism." My aim is not to defend any variant of this position, but to point out that Miliband's critique is not managed in such a way as to provide a convincing reason why some form of that position is not morally tenable. To provide such a reason would require analyses Milliband doesn't undertake.

But I wish to repeat that Miliband's book is solid and important. The difficulty I have sketched operates at a level of abstraction that may seem remote from the instructive descriptions of the capitalist machinery of domination which are the chief ingredients of the book. If one is already a convinced socialist, one's beliefs will be considerably reinforced by Miliband's work. If one is sympathetic to socialism but not yet convinced, one will be, I think, very much moved by Miliband's work to seek to understand the view of persons that underlies it. This seems indeed a large contribution.

Allen Guttmann

Historian's Decline

THE DECLINE OF RADICALISM: REFLECTIONS ON AMERICA TODAY, by Daniel J. Boorstin. New York: Random House. 141 pp. $4.95.

"TEMPORA MUTANT," remarked the Roman analysts of social change, to which we can add not only our Amen but also our uncomfortable awareness of the rapidity of change in analyses of change. In the 1950s, Americanists of various disciplines seemed anxious to isolate the "distinctively American" in our national experiences and to emphasize continuities of ideas and institutions. In the social sciences, the accent was on consensus, shared experience, and "an end of ideology." Among historians, a name to conjure with was Daniel J. Boorstin, whose *Genius of American Politics* argued that Americans have always accepted certain basic values as "given" and, therefore, seldom had to bother with political ideas. There has been, instead, an unconscious ideological consensus in America within which disputes have been legalistic and/or pragmatic. This was the dominant intellectual style, and Boorstin was one of its most extreme and popular advocates.

Now we have a new set of conjurers, the "New Left" historians of the 1960s who have revived and revised the analytic model of Marxism. For the less talented among them, Boorstin, Louis Hartz, and Daniel Bell form a kind of negative reference group, representatives of a theory not worth the tribute of refutation. The concept of consensus, allegedly useless as an instrument of knowledge, is relegated by the new dogmatists to the shabby arsenal of presidential rhetoric. Fortunately, the most talented of radical historians—Eugene Genovese, N. Gordon Levin, Stephan Thernstrom—have sought to incorporate rather than to dismiss whatever is to be learned from the scholars of the 1950s. Whether or not the owl of Minerva takes flight at dusk, the crab of Clio continues to scuttle back and forth in what the least pessimistic of us hope is a progressive series of zigzags.

Having found ourselves caught in the assorted ills to which our technological society is heir, we are not likely to be in a mood to celebrate even those aspects of American experience that deserve celebration. All the more reason, one might suppose, to turn to Boorstin's *Decline of Radicalism* for tonic reminders of national accomplishment. The difficulty with this compensatory turn, or return, is that the historian who subtly and learnedly reinterpreted our past in the first two volumes of *The Americans* has become something of a clown in this present collection of essays loosely related to the theme of radicalism.

The main difficulty lies in his central concept, community. It was, of course, precisely the difference between community and society, *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft,* that fascinated Toennies, Durkheim, Weber, and other founders of modern social theory. Some form of

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contrast between these ideal types of organization underlies every significant interpretation of the transition from traditional to modern social systems. But Boorstin will have none of this. He sees community everywhere, even in the very processes of rationalization that disintegrate the traditional community.

Boorstin refers to "statistical communities" and to "consumption communities," by which he means people categorized by measurements in income, age, shoe size, choice of cigarettes, etc. He refers to purchasers of Mustangs and to chewers of Doublemint gum as members of "consumption communities." He concludes that we are, indeed, one people: "We are held to other men, not only by a few iron bonds, but by countless gossamer webs tying together the trivia of our lives every day." It will be a comfort to think that the militants heaving Molotov cocktails and the cops dropping tear-gas canisters are all consumers of Coca-Cola and therefore members of a "consumption community." Perhaps Richard Nixon and Eldridge Cleaver wear the same size trousers.

The initial confusions lead to more complicated forms of nonsense. Boorstin lights upon the distinction between wealth, which is private and can be secret, and "standard of living," which is public and by definition cannot be kept secret. He concludes from the different associations of the two concepts that all is well: "One man's standard of living cannot be sharply separated from that of others. Each person is part of everyone else's standard of living. You are my environment." Enchanted by this type of community, Boorstin needn't ask if the harmonic interdependence of man and man is ever exploitive, if some go hungry *because* others consume on a vast scale.

But membership in a set (in the mathematical sense) is not ipso facto a form of community. Some memberships are obviously more important than others. Boorstin grants, or at least implies, that some aspects of "community" are more important (i.e., "iron bonds"), but he rambles on as if differences in race, religion, sex, and class can be equated with those in eye color or choice of whiskey. Although he urges readers not to remain "imprisoned in an old-fashioned vocabulary," the semantic anarchy of his essays ought to be an object lesson for historians scornful of conceptualizations.

GIVEN BOORSTIN'S CHEERFUL DISCOVERY of numberless quantified forms of "community," the existence of alienated minorities can be explained only in pathological terms. Boorstin devotes two essays to the problem of radicalism in American society. In the first he draws the distinction between disagreement, which is intellectual, and dissent, which is emotional. He insists that reasoned disagreement is a necessary part of the democratic process, while dissent is irrational, emotional, to be avoided. By now one is, or ought to be, thoroughly exasperated by Boorstin's carelessness. Disagreements in logic and mathematics can perhaps be entirely intellectual and dispassionate, but it is hardly possible in the world of political action to disagree about means and ends without becoming emotionally involved. When a man feels that a policy is criminally wrong and that the executors of that policy have insulated themselves from all disagreements, he is liable to fall short of the civic ideal of sweet reasonableness. It is *because* men feel deeply that rationality is indispensable, but Boorstin's sotto voce pieties in defense of the status quo are an evasion of the real problems.

Boorstin's second contribution to a critique of radicalism is an attack on the "new barbarism." In contrast to the radicals of the 1930s, who sought significance, had programs, and formed "communities," the radicals of today are pampered, infantile egomaniacs: "They [radicals] abandon the quest for meaning, for fear it might entangle their thoughts and feelings with those of others, and they plunge into 'Direct Action' for fear that second thoughts might deny them this satisfaction to their ego. Theirs is a mindless, obsessive quest for power."

Kenneth Keniston's *Young Radicals* came to somewhat different, somewhat more complicated conclusions. Keniston indicates that various kinds of people are called to radicalism for a great variety of reasons, some of them related to the institutional arrangements within which radicals and other Americans live. But for Boorstin, it is enough to categorize radicals as barbarians, "apathetes" who *feel* apart from others.

The best essays in this sad book return to ideas set forth in Boorstin's earlier works—*The Mysterious Science of the Law* (1941), *The Lost World of Thomas Jefferson* (1948),

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and *The Americans* (1958–). I recommend these studies to anyone who wants to deal with something more than a self-made straw man.

John H. Gagnon

Remembering the Wobblies

WE SHALL BE ALL: A HISTORY OF THE IWW, by Melvin Dubofsky. Chicago: Quadrangle Books. 557 pp. $12.50.

THE WOBBLIES (IWW) stand for modern American radicals as a mythic memory of a virtuous past. There are those of the New Left (perhaps a majority) who do not even remember their informal name, but remember or not, they employ much the same rhetoric. Among older radicals the IWW is that revolutionary movement which existed prior to the failures and imported ideologies characterizing the American radical scene after the Russian Revolution. We call up images of Joe Hill, Leadville, and the dark mills of Lawrence—images that resonate to our sometimes adolescent impulse to identify with a morally pure loser, a loser uncontaminated by the dilemmas and choices of victory and, unlike the AFL of then and the AFL–CIO of now, untainted by the differential exploitation of other workers.

This book by Melvin Dubofsky, a professor of history at the University of Wisconsin, is one of a number of recent works dealing with the IWW. It is more broadly conceived than its fellows, since it ranges from the origins of the Wobblies in the Western Federation of Miners to the final days when the IWW leadership served time in the Federal Penitentiary at Leavenworth.

Dubofsky is perhaps best in his treatment of the origins of the IWW in its precursor, the Western Federation of Miners. Unlike those television versions of the American West (perhaps we need a revision of white history as well) which present the beginning of metal extraction as a confluence of gold, burros, bearded old men and gunfighters, Dubofsky points out that the miners of the American West had a tradition of trade union experience, a common language and ethnic origins, and represented a skilled-trade orientation. In its original form the WFM shared the traditional aims of American business unionism, focusing on bread-and-butter issues within the capitalist system. It was the intrusion of large American mining corporations into the economically underdeveloped western states that drove these trade union Populists first to socialism and then to the proto-anarcho-syndicalism that characterized the ideology (but not the actions) of the IWW. In the beginning, the workers and the communities in which they lived were allies, but in the protracted struggles between the union and the colonizing corporations a wedge was driven between the miners and the emerging small-business and white-collar classes. The most important element was the role of the state and federal governments, the "slugging agents of the capitalist classes." Again and again the miners and their allies in the local communities resisted the corporations, only to be subdued by the capacity of the corporations to call in the power of central governments.

When the IWW emerged out of the ruins of WFM, a revolutionary ideology was enunciated that never really characterized the activities of the IWW. While its ideology was revolutionary, direct action, and anticontract (not doing business with bosses through agreements), its failure to maintain a stable membership was clearly the result of external economic conditions and the hostility of the federal government rather than a lack of organizing capital. When the business cycle was on the rise, the IWW actively organized and maintained its power to engage in protracted battles. When the business cycle turned bad—remember that they were organizing workers with highly substitutable skills at the margins of the economy—the membership dissolved. This failure was to characterize all industrial unionism in the United States until the trade union movement was able to enlist the help or at least the neutrality of the federal government.

THIS BOOK MAKES CLEAR that the IWW did not always miss chances or show bad tactical judgment. The hostility of the government between 1905 and 1915 to trade unionism in

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general, and during the First World War to the class internationalism of the IWW in particular, created conditions under which it had no chances. The IWW theorists missed what most naive economic Marxists have also missed: that a central requirement of change is to gain control of the apparatus of government. After the beginning of the war the IWW, which had just begun to have a major constituency, found itself opposed by the mentality of a nation caught up in jingoism. Each of its attempts to improve the lot of the workers was met by savage repression. The deportation of some 2,000 miners from Bisbee, Arizona, a town owned and controlled by the Phelps Dodge Company, was the most outstanding of such reprisals. Subsequently the IWW went through a tragic decline. It was beset by internal bickering and caught up in the red scares of the late teens and early twenties. The Russian Revolution offered a new revolutionary style to replace native Populist anarchism and many of the Wobblies moved into the Communist party, eventually viewing their IWW origins as part of an undisciplined anarchism.

The first part of the book is perhaps most satisfying, both as objective history and a picture of the early successes of the IWW. This part is also best documented. The destruction of the IWW and the trials of its leadership are more cursorily reported, perhaps because the author found these chapters the most difficult to write (as I did to read). Another reason the book falls off at the end is that the records of the IWW were seized as part of the persecution of the leadership and then destroyed by the federal courts. Records of the Military Intelligence and the Bureau of Investigation (forerunner of the FBI) and the Justice Department dealing with the IWW remain classified (some as recently as the early 1960s, by J. Edgar Hoover), and this too has handicapped the author.

A few quarrels. One is the nearly gratuitous inclusion of the concept of the "culture of poverty" as popularized by Oscar Lewis. As with most concepts invented to explain a consciousness arising from specific historical conditions, it is unwise to project it back in time. While the physical conditions may appear the same (and it is not at all clear that there is much in common between the barrios of Puerto Rico in 1960 and the lumbercamps of the American West in 1905), the larger historical situation and the differing origins of the people under consideration preclude so facile an application. Except for this lapse Professor Dubofsky sticks to the record as he finds it and his historical interpretations are generally of a high order and completely sensible. There are times when one would wish a slightly wider perspective with more information about the external environment of the IWW. The economic material is rudimentary, as is the discussion of the political structure of the government and the reasons for its nearly total submission to the industrialists. Perhaps what is needed is more context and more generalizing, but this may only be a sociologist's bias.

The book is a solid contribution, it does honor to the history of men and women who could not win then, but who offer us moral models for our own actions today. The last line of the Wobbly song which forms the title of the book, "We Shall Be All," matches the song of another movement, "We Shall Overcome."

ON THE TRAIL OF THE AMERICAN HERO (*continued from page* 186)

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gives backhand recognition to Louie's power: they let him lead the band for a minute with his back to the camera, then permit him to turn and sing less than one chorus. But much to my chagrin, Louis Toms it to a fare-thee-well, clasping his hands and quivering with joy at the sight of his old Massa Barbra Streisand.

Nevertheless I did discover in *Hello, Dolly,* the one and only American film hero who has retained the power of self-assertion, true love and total triumph. I'm referring of course to Miss Streisand, who does as she pleases with complete abandon, brings off everything she tries, and swamps anyone who comes on screen with her. She is all over Walter Matthau and in the course of the picture she thoroughly emasculates him. She is more heroic than Paul Newman, Peter Fonda, Dustin Hoffman and Arlo Guthrie put together and rolled into a baleful look. Let's face it—when it comes to current American film heroes, Barbra Streisand is the only one with balls.

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